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THE GIFT IS RICH



THE GIFT IS RICH

BY

E. RUSSELL CARTER

DRAWINGS BY C. TERRY SAUL

FRIENDSHIP PRESS • NEW YORK

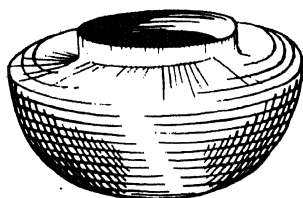
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*Dedicated to
the scores of Indian Americans
old and young
who
through their quiet and deep friendship
have taught the author
resounding lessons
in the fine art of
meaningful living*

1991.5.5.946



CONTENTS

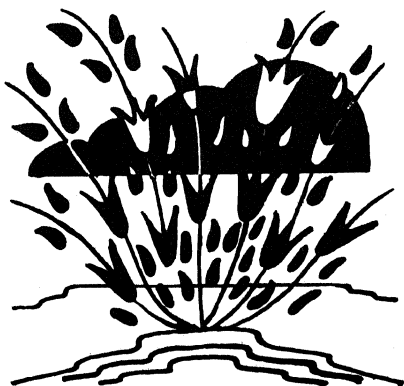
1:	Out of the Past—The Present	1
2:	The Menu—Please	9
3:	Nothing New Under the Sun	18
4:	They Taught Us to Play	29
5:	Now We Say It This Way	35
6:	The World Within	39
7:	Religion Was Life	55
8:	Music—the Voice God Heard	63
9:	Deep Feeling Must Be Expressed	75
10:	All Things Must Be Made Beautiful	95
11:	They Shall Lead the People	101
	References	113

*“ ’Tis the spirit in which the gift is rich”
The Spirit of the Gift.*

EDMUND VANCE COOKE



HASKELL INSTITUTE



CHAPTER ONE

Out of the Past—the Present

IT HAPPENED in one of the large government boarding schools for Indians. The religious work director was talking with a group of high school students. They were talking about the young Indian of today and the many problems confronting him as he attempts to adjust to life, and the director said, "It is true that you are different from your parents. You are much different from your grandparents."

To this reasoning the young Indians gave ready agreement. They knew better than most people that time brings many changes in the cultural pattern of any group. Past experiences—not always happy ones—had given them many reasons to believe that their cultural pattern was different from that of their parents and grandparents. Changes had come about in great measure because of the influences of the dominant, non-Indian culture by which they had been surrounded.

The conversation continued, and it came as a surprise to

many of the students when the director said, "I want you to know that I have become different, too, since I came to know and to associate with you."

What was being pointed up in that discussion group was the fact that American culture has come to us from many sources, there having been many contributors, and that all Americans owe a great debt to the many smaller racial and ethnic groups from whom so much of our way of life has been taken. Cultural influence has not been a one-way process. Even as we have, by sheer force of numbers, had tremendous influence in molding the lives of those we dominate, by the same processes have we been captivated by those groups with which we have had even the slightest association.

Altogether too often we have been inclined to think of cultural contact in terms of differences, points where conflict occurs, of domination rather than sharing and borrowing. We must repeatedly remind ourselves that this sharing and borrowing does take place. Civilization has always been the product of the ability and creation of many, never of a single person or people. The sharing and borrowing has to a great extent been a totally unconscious process, and where recognized it has often been resisted. But even so, the truth remains that we steadily assume many of the habit patterns of those groups or individuals with whom we come into contact.

It has been said that "what we are, we are now becoming." Equally true is the fact that what we are today in our national life is a sum total of the contributions of all racial and cultural groups that have in any way, large or small, played a part in American life. Out of the past has come our present.

In a peculiar sense this is true of the Indian Americans, for they were here first and at one time constituted the majority

group in America. The early white settlers were forced by circumstances to incorporate much of Indian knowledge into their daily lives for the sake of survival.

There have been many who have endeavored to underestimate the contributions of the Indians, setting forth the idea that so small a group, coming from such "uncivilized and primitive" conditions, could have had no influence upon a people just arrived from cultural Europe. Such ideas have been steadily refuted by all who have made any study of Indians and their societies, for it is obvious that Indian Americans have made important contributions to human culture. So great have been the Indians' contributions that many authorities, Erland Norden-skiöld, noted Swedish anthropologist among them, have compared them favorably with those of the Teutonic people in the era preceding the discovery of America.

The first task confronting the early settlers in this new land was to learn how to live in this vast area. They were confronted with a rugged wilderness from which must be wrested food, clothing, and shelter, and with which they had to harmonize their new life. Much of what they learned has become so firmly imbedded in our American way of life that it is impossible at times to recognize its true origin.

It is the purpose of this brief volume to point out some of the areas in which the Indian Americans' contributions have been significant. Obviously, in a volume of this size, it cannot be an exhaustive record. It is to be hoped that it may serve as an introduction to a most fascinating subject and that the reader may continue his reading in more extended and detailed accounts.

When reference is made to those influences of Indian origin, it should be understood that it is impossible to think in terms of *one* Indian culture. There are many and they are widely

varied.¹ There is no such thing as *the* Indian language, *the* Indian religion, or *the* Indian way of life. Such things were, and are, as widely varied as were the cultural patterns in Europe, stretching from Lapland to the southern slopes of Spain and Italy. The Indians today still speak many different languages and dialects.

Generally speaking, each area of America offered its distinctive characteristics, its own way of life, its various cultural patterns, physical characteristics, languages, religions, etc. Yet in all the areas were to be found certain common customs, characteristics, and ways of living.¹

There was wide variation between the habits of the Indians of the Eastern forests and those of the seed gatherers of the Pacific Coast area. James Fenimore Cooper, perhaps as much as any other man, created the traditional concept of the Indian the world over—the man in buckskins and war bonnet, hunting the buffalo and living in his tepee. This was because he drew his examples largely from the eastern half of the nation. To this concept must be added the equally important and unique traits and practices of the village dwellers and farmers of the Southwest, as well as those of the more nomadic hunters and horsemen of the great plains. Indian life becomes more meaningful and interesting when we become aware of the uniqueness of the life of the fishermen of the Pacific Northwest as compared to the life of the Navaho shepherds or the desert dwellers. They have all contributed—but each in his own way. Cultural anthropologists have divided our nation up into several cultural areas out of which we find varying contributions coming, each adding its bit to the life of the nation.

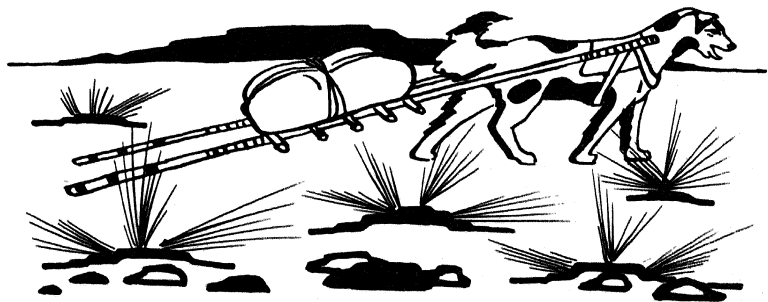
Found in the great Western Plains were the Dakota (Sioux), Assiniboin, Arapaho, Blackfoot, Comanche, Cheyenne, and

others. They were known as the buffalo hunters and tepee dwellers. They were roamers by necessity, for they followed the game. In moving about so much they developed a most ingenious mode of transportation, the travois behind the dog, and later the horse. This consisted of the drag constructed of two poles attached to the back of the dog or horse.

They lived off the land, gathering herbs and berries and killing the wild game. Animal skins served for clothing as well as for shelter.

Another type of life was to be found in what is now southern California. Here the Indians lived a different life than their plains brethren. Instead of roaming and hunting, they lived in more permanent brush shelters and ate small game, fish, and berries. Their life was simple, and their social organization was certainly not complex. They did some weaving but no pottery making.

In contrast were the Indians farther north, in the area extend-

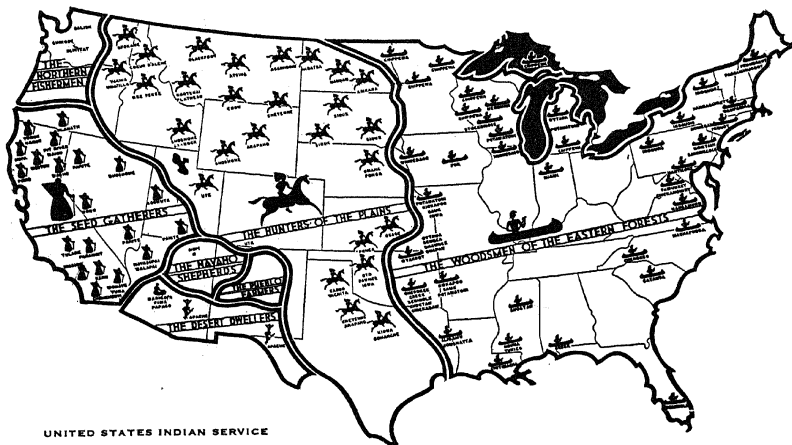


ing from what is now California to Alaska. Here the tribes depended chiefly upon the sea as a source of food, lived in large plank houses, and traveled in big canoes. As a matter of fact, the descendants of these people are today the builders of the canoes and boats used in the races that constitute one of the major sports attractions of the area. These people were excellent basket weavers and spent much time in wood carving—creating the famous totem poles.

Far to the east in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence areas were to be found the Ojibway (or Chippewa), Menominee, Sac and Fox, and Winnebago Indians. They were excellent hunters and fishers, while at the same time they achieved much skill as gardeners and farmers. In the wintertime they lived in permanent, dome-shaped shelters covered with bark and mats, while in the summer they lived in bark houses. They traveled in birchbark canoes and dugouts and often in winter made good use of snowshoes.

Farther east was perhaps the most advanced group in the area, the Iroquois and their related tribes. They were probably the most skillful agriculturists and potters. They lived in long houses and had a closely knit family or clan structure. From these Iroquois came the League of the Six Nations, one of the most fascinating developments in American history.¹

From the Southeast came another distinct group made up largely of the Cherokee, the Choctaw, the Chickasaw, and the Creek, along with the Seminole. In many ways these were among the most advanced of all the Indian tribes or bands, having gone far in the field of agriculture, complex tribal organizations, and so on. These people later were to become known as the Five Civilized Tribes and participated in the black episode in American history when most of them were removed



UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE

from their native areas along the "Trail of Tears" to Indian Territory or Oklahoma.

In the vast Southwest area of our land are the Navaho, with their sheep and weaving looms, the silversmiths' anvils, the hogans and droves of horses; and the Hopi, Zuñi, and other Pueblo or village-dwelling people, the apartment-house builders. From these people came many of our basic foods, the most important being corn. Besides being good farmers, they were, and are, skilled craftsmen, being excellent pottery makers, weavers, and silversmiths. In this area women's rights and social participation advanced greatly. The people were extremely religious, and the sacred dances held a vital place in their lives.

Thus we see that Indians were not all alike. Nor are they today. All these variations but add to their fascination and importance as we try to understand the many ways in which they have contributed to life as we experience it.

We have usually spoken of influences in the past tense, but

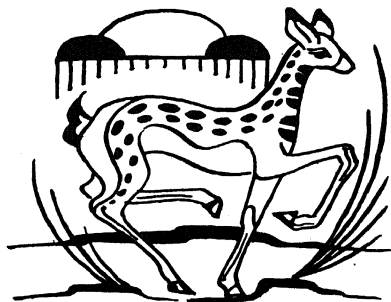
they certainly cannot be confined to the past. They belong to the present as well. This point is beautifully expressed in the words of Pleasant Porter, last elected chief of the Creek nation, who spoke these words to the Council in 1900:

The vitality of our race still persists. We have not lived for naught. We are the original discoverers of this continent and the conquerors of it from the animal kingdom, and on it first taught the arts of peace and war, and first planted the institutions of virtue, truth, and liberty. The European nations found us here and were made aware that it was possible for men to exist and subsist here. We have given the European people on this continent our thought forces—the best blood of our ancestors having intermingled with their best statesmen and leading citizens. We have made ourselves an indestructible element in their national history. We have led the vanguard of civilization in our conflicts with them for tribal existence from ocean to ocean. The race that has rendered this service to other nations of mankind cannot utterly perish.²

No scholar nor orator of any race or social status could have said it any better.

Thus from many areas, many cultural backgrounds, the Indian American, in supplying much upon which America has seemed to thrive—basic foods, medicines, distinctive traits of character and attitudes, art, music, implements, and a peculiar way of life—has led all to agree that had there been no Indians, life today would be much different and certainly less abundant and rich.³ It behooves all of us to catch a bit of the spirit of Quaker John Woolman when he said, “I must go out to the Indian Reservation, for perchance I might learn something.”





CHAPTER TWO

The Menu—Please

AS AMERICANS, we take great pride in our abundance, in our high standard of living, our bursting storehouses and rolling fields. But how many of us recall those very early days when our ancestors were clinging frantically to the small threads of life, that first year at Plymouth? It had been a terrific winter. Of the 102 who had crossed the Atlantic, already forty-seven had been buried in the frozen soil. Spring was here, but life was quickly ebbing, and it would be a long time before the crops were ready for harvest.

It was then that the white man had one of his earliest experiences with the Indian—a friendly fellow who came along in the nick of time and saved the pitifully small group of survivors by showing them the fine art of the clambake. These early arrivals from cultured Europe, with her hundreds of years of learning and refinements of living, were under the impression that clams were poisonous! Any Indian knew better!

That early Indian friend was the forerunner of scores of Indians who were later to introduce the foreigners to abundant living in this huge, new, and rugged country. It took many of the newcomers a long time to learn it, but others determined the history of our country by a quick appreciation of what these "primitive" people had to give. Had it not been so, America would be a far different country than it is now.

It is true that in many instances the non-Indian civilizations of the world had long before, even in ancient times, contributed many of the things to be mentioned hereafter. But the fact remains that the Indians had the ingenuity and ability to utilize and develop like creations quite independently and reflected unique abilities to adapt these techniques to an environment that was in that early day quite hostile and even terrifying to the early settlers.

As we pore over our nutritional diets and realize the central place held by corn, we should be reminded that this grain, the Indian's maize, was given to us by the earlier inhabitants in those critical days when food meant life—as it still does. Toasted cornflakes, so much in evidence in advertising as well as on American breakfast tables, were common diet for the Indians,¹ as were succotash and hominy. Many older Americans today hold nostalgic memories of the lye hominy made out in the back yard with wood ashes, but most of them do not know that the same process was used by the Indian American.²

This is not to claim that the procedure was invented by the Indian, but it should mean something to us that the Indian, in developing such methods, was just as ingenious as his new neighbor.

Corn was, perhaps, a common dish to most of the Indian tribes, but particularly to the tribes of the Southwest. The Pueblo

people made the hominy, then ground up the swollen kernels and made them into the corn pancakes now known by their Mexican name *tortillas*, a famous food all over the United States and Mexico.³

Even the roasting ear, eagerly anticipated each spring by millions of Americans, was well known to the Indians, and methods of preparation were many and varied—but each highly efficient.

One common practice was to dig a pit and throw into it the young, unhusked ears of corn, along with hot stones. A small amount of water was then dashed upon the stones, and the pit was covered with earth, leaving the corn to steam, often for several hours. The double boiler atop the most modern stove can make corn no more delicious.

The art of drying corn was utilized, and the method was so effective that many months' supply for an entire family could easily be preserved.

It will no doubt come as a surprise to many of our present-day farm experts when they are reminded that the very productive methods they advocate were known and practiced by the early Indian Americans. We can proudly point to a 40 per cent increase in our national corn crop, but let us give some credit where credit is due. It has come about by a rediscovery of the Indians' use of hybrid corn!¹

Much of our present knowledge is the rediscovery of ancient practices, and the process of cross-pollinization seems to have been known to the Indians in those early days.

Speaking of corn, let us not forget the good "old-fashioned" corn bread, for old-fashioned it is indeed. It was a mainstay in the Indians' menu, and it was they who taught us its tastiness.

Further use was made of corn through an ingenious method

of producing sugar. Sugar as we know it came with the white man, but long before that time the Indians had learned that sugar could be made from corn through a rather unhygienic but highly chemical method of chewing in the mouth fine corn meal, then adding it to a batter of meal and water. The saliva combined with the cornstarch to produce sugar!³ Indeed, the white man refined the method as well as the sugar by a perfected chemical process, but we will have to admit he couldn't improve upon the ingenuity displayed by the early Americans.

Until very recently the white farmer could show but little improvement in his methods of husking his corn crop, for his steel husking peg had its Indian counterpart made of bone or wood.²

A common sight on the rural American scene was, and *is* in many places, the old mill where the farmers brought their corn for grinding. Familiar to us all were the huge stone wheels moving together to pulverize the corn. These mills were ingenious devices, but not any more so than the Indian woman's metate and mano, or grinding stone. Grist mills of today, although more efficient, are much less colorful, for often, as the Indian woman ground the corn, she sang one of the ancient corn songs of her people, such as:

O, my lovely mountain,

To' yallanne!

O, my lovely mountain,

To' yallanne!

To' yallanne!

* * *

Lovely! See the cloud, the cloud appear!

Lovely! See the rain, the rain draw near!

Who spoke?

'Twas the little corn-ear
High on the tip of the stalk
Singing while it looked at me
Talking aloft there—
“Ah, perchance the floods
Hither moving—
Ah, may the floods come this way!”

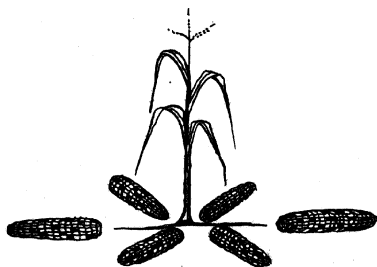
* * *

Yonder, yonder see the fair rainbow,
See the rainbow brightly decked and painted!
Now the swallow bringeth glad news to your corn,
Singing, “Hitherward, hitherward,
hitherward, rain,
“Hither come!”

Singing, “Hitherward, hitherward,
hitherward, white cloud,
“Hither come!”

Now hear the corn-plants murmur,
“We are growing everywhere!
Hi, yai! The world, how fair!”

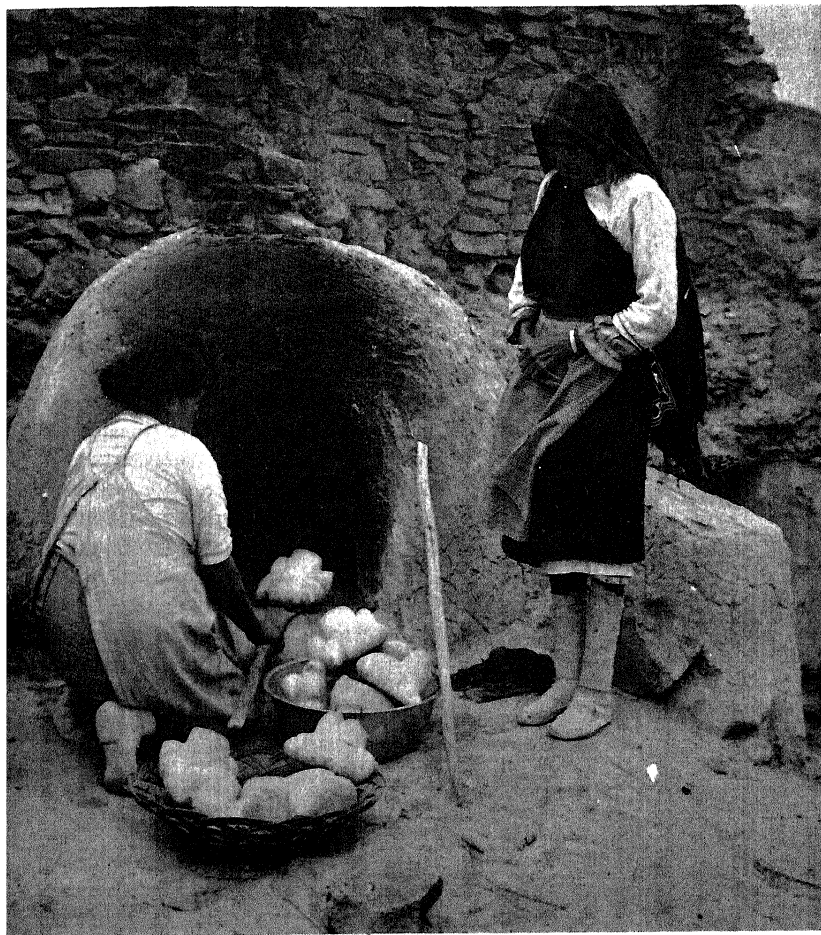
Zuñi Corn Songs⁴





U. S. INDIAN SERVICE

Many Indian women on the reservations still use the traditional method of baking bread in outdoor ovens (opposite page). Others, like the student shown in the school log cabin at Haskell Institute, are learning ways of saving labor and time and are being taught nutritional values. When they return to their reservations, their new knowledge will help them to bring up healthier families.



EWING GALLOWAY

The Indian showed astounding ability in his development of plant resources. Long before Columbus saw these shores, the natives of North and South America had under cultivation at least forty plants now used by the rest of the world. Thanks to them we have such things as the lima bean, peanut, potato, tomato, alligator pear, pumpkin, manioc, tobacco, and Indian rubber.² They even grew strawberries in great abundance. Roger Williams remarked, "In some parts where the natives have planted, I have many times seen as many strawberries as would fill a good ship within a few miles' compass." They passed on to us their knowledge of how to make cocoa, baked beans, tamales, and maple syrup!

Long before tea was imported from Asia, white people learned from the Indians that there were many spicy plants and herbs that, when steeped in hot water, produced pleasing beverages and medicines. The Pueblos, for instance, made tea from berries, leaves, and even flowers. They also made a drink from sprouted corn, which they claimed, by the way, to be non-intoxicating!³

All of this did not just happen, but came as a result of intelligent and orderly agricultural development. The Indian taught the first settlers an advanced theory of fertilization by teaching them to place a fish in each hill of corn as they planted the fields.² He also blazed new trails in planting methods, for he preceded the white farmer by many years in the improved system of planting in hills at intervals of about three feet. He learned through experience that properly spaced stalks of corn produced more and larger ears than stalks that grew too close together. Later developments proved the wisdom of the plan. The present-day farmer uses his modern machinery to pull the earth to the growing stalks; the Indian accomplished the same purpose with his

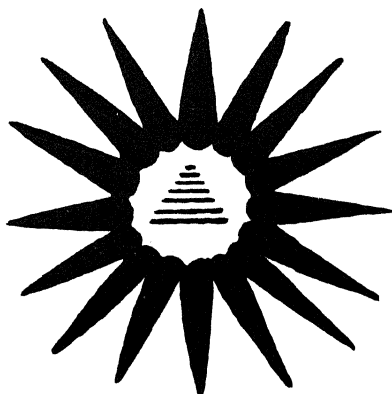
crude hoe made from a piece of wood sharpened at one edge.

Soil conservation and maximum use of moisture were concerns of the Indians long before the white man arrived, and they showed remarkable foresight and ingenuity. Quite frequently the fields were laid out in such a way that they would catch and hold the summer rains, and in order to avoid having their fields washed away the Indians developed a system of dams and gullies to check the water flow and spread the moisture. Soil conservationists could well imitate present-day Hopi farmers, who make small dams around each plant to hold the moisture and prevent erosion.³

Our culture cannot even take credit for the idea behind our ever-growing and efficient irrigation systems, for several of the tribes, particularly the Pueblo of the Southwest and several of the Mexican tribes, had complete and effective irrigation systems in operation when the first white settlers came.

All should feel a deep sense of obligation and appreciation toward these people who gave so much out of their seeming little. Therefore, when we settle ourselves amid our plenty in our comfortable cafes and homes and blandly call for the menu or ask, "What's for supper?", let us remember our deep indebtedness to those "unskilled" and "primitive" people whose gifts are spread on our tables.





CHAPTER THREE

Nothing New Under the Sun

THE INDIAN has shown an amazing ability to use to his advantage those things readily at hand, and had the early settlers not utilized his inventions in their struggle for existence, it would have been a losing battle. Many of those inventions are now incorporated in American life to such an extent that we have long since forgotten their true origin.

For instance, thousands of navy boys have recollections, fond or otherwise, of long nights spent swinging to and fro in a navy hammock, but probably not one of them knows he has the South American Indians to thank for this ingenious device.¹ The Indians had the hammock developed to perfection, but it took many years for the white man to appreciate the fact that it was the only practical sleeping device for a rolling ship—or a lazy afternoon on a shady lawn!

By the same method, many Indian mothers were able to make swinging cradles as effective as those used by their white sisters.

This was achieved simply by tying four ropes to the baby board and hanging it from the ceiling. Uncomplicated, but still a cradle.²

Home owners, or those dreaming about a future home, often envisage a low, rambling house with a flat roof. Our countryside are becoming covered with such homes, probably constructed of blocks and stuccoed on the outside. Recently some builders have projected the idea of using "something entirely new," earth blocks, in wall construction. One of our large state universities, through its school of engineering, has demonstrated the newest techniques in the use of earth in building construction. But hundreds of years before the white men ever came to this continent, the Southwestern Indians knew very well that the best house they could possibly build was of earth, and the adobe method of construction, used for at least four hundred years, has now become the new pattern for homes.³

The same clever people long ago knew the luxury of walls plastered inside and stuccoed on the outside. The women of several of the Southwestern tribes have been experts in keeping their homes in excellent condition in this manner.

Many of the Indian inventions were taken over by the early settlers with but little change, and the first white men, in facing a cold, blustery winter, learned the warmth of a bark house, the necessity for snowshoes. In tramping the trail, they soon came to appreciate the comfort of the moccasin. The Indians' birchbark canoe soon proved its worth as it became the principal mode of transportation through the swamp and lake country.

To the Indian also goes the rather dubious honor of having outstripped his white friends in devising all the known ways of using tobacco. Whether it be cigars, cigarettes, pipes, snuff, or

chewing tobacco, the Indian was there first and the white man has taken over. Nothing new has been added!⁴

As indicated in a previous chapter, the Indian devised many tools with which he farmed his land. Some tribes of the Southwest used a "wooden hoe" without a handle, made of a piece of mesquite wood and sharpened with a stone.²

Great but simple ingenuity is apparent in the Indian's use of a small twig with a piece of thong fastened to the larger end—a unique needle to be used in sewing as well as in certain games.²

Perfectly astounding are the statistics today revealing the sales of women's cosmetics. They reflect the continuing hunger of all women for those things the Indian women had hundreds of years ago—and got for nothing. Indian women produced their own "rouge" by grinding up minerals, and used herbs to make many perfumes and other "toilet goods." Today's manufacturers cannot even lay claim to cold cream, for Indian women were there first with animal tallow.²

Expenditures for chewing gum almost equal those for cosmetics, but again the early Americans showed the white men how to achieve the pleasures of chewing through the use of at least a dozen plants, or the dried sap of chicle or milkweed. They even utilized cattail for this pleasure.²

Also to be remembered is the fact that cochineal, one of the most prized of the world's dyes, was used in prehistoric Mexico and Peru.

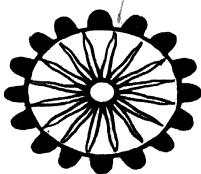
In the field of animal husbandry, it is significant to note that Indians long ago achieved some remarkable discoveries. To them must go the credit for the development of the stingless bee, the guinea pig, the Muscovy duck, the turkey, and the llama.¹

A great leader is often distinguished by his ability to realize

what past developments and inventions can mean for his people. Such a leader was Sequoya, a Cherokee, sometimes known to his English-speaking friends as George Gist, or Guess. In the setting of his day, he was a genius—a silversmith, blacksmith, and artist. Most of all, he was a man motivated by a deep sense of social responsibility to his people, the Cherokee Indians, a proud and intelligent but poverty-stricken people.

He was troubled about the fact that they were confronted by an encroaching and demanding culture and were limited in their ability to cope with it. They could not read nor write. Their language had never been recorded, for there was no alphabet through which the Cherokee tongue could be expressed. But there had been other leaders down through the ages who had devised alphabets best suited to their various languages, and an idea of such an alphabet for his people was thus planted in the fertile mind of Sequoya.

He created an alphabet that was perfectly adapted to the Cherokee tongue and that expressed it as the English alphabet never could. His alphabet was quickly adopted and soon made possible the publication of the Cherokee newspaper, *The Phoenix*. So great was the impact of this man and his tremendous technical achievement that he has been referred to as the Cherokee Moses.





AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

Sequoya, brilliant inventor of the Cherokee alphabet, observed the white man's use of writing and then studied his own language and various alphabets in order to devise a means of written expression for his people.

ODE TO SEQUOYA

by Alexander Posey, Creek Indian poet

The names of Waitie and Boudinot—

 The valiant warrior and gifted sage—
And other Cherokees may be forgot,
 But thy name shall descend to every age;
The mysteries enshrouding Cadmus's name
Cannot obscure thy claim to fame.

The people's language cannot perish—nay,
 When from the face of this great continent
Inevitable doom hath swept away
 The last memorial, the last fragments
Of tribes, some scholar learned shall pore
Upon thy letters, seeking ancient lore.

Some bard shall lift a voice in praise of thee,
 In moving numbers tell the world how men
Scoffed thee, hissed thee, charged with lunacy!
 And who could not give 'nough honor when
At length, in spite of jeers, of want and need,
Thy genius shaped a dream into deed.

By cloud-capped summits in the boundless West,
 Or mighty river rolling to the sea,
Where'er thy footsteps led thee on thy quest,
 Unknown rest thee, illustrious Cherokee!

(Read at the proceedings in Statuary Hall of the United States Capitol upon the unveiling and presentation of the statue of Sequoya by the State of Oklahoma)



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

Mrs. Etta Dalton, Navaho Indian of Ganado, Arizona, flew to New York to present to Dr. Eugene Nida, secretary of the American Bible Society's work of translation, the completed manuscript of the *Gospel of Mark* in Navaho. Published in 1955, this is the most recent translation of a portion of Scripture into an Indian language.

Perhaps no other age has seen such dramatic and far-reaching developments in the field of medicine and therapeutic endeavors as ours. America can take just pride in such accomplishments, but that pride should be softened and mellowed somewhat in the light of all that the Indians have done to make such progress possible. It is in this field that the Indian people have made some of their greatest contributions:

In medicines and plant products, too, the world is indebted to the American Indians. Several precious balsams, such as balsam of Peru, Tolu balsam, copaiva balsam, and sweetgum have been derived from those developed by the Indians. The therapeutic and medicinal qualities of witch hazel, quinine, jalapa, hydrastis, cascara, ipecac, and cocaine have entered our pharmacopoeia by way of the American Indian.¹

To this add sagrada, oil of wintergreen, arnica, and petroleum jelly. These and many other native medicines were used for healing purposes in America long before the first white doctor came. As a matter of fact, so extensive was such knowledge that "in the four hundred years that the European physicians and botanists have been examining and analyzing the flora of America, they have not yet discovered a medicinal herb not known to Indians."⁵

Aside from the medicinal contributions of the Indians, they also pioneered in other realms of therapy. Dr. Charles A. Eastman, the famous Indian physician, long ago set forth some personal convictions later echoed by many eminent doctors. He stated that the health of all living things depends upon pure air, pure water, and pure food. He championed the value of meat and fish as food, including such parts as white men have only recently learned to value. Dr. Eastman would probably chuckle

if he could hear our psychiatrists and child psychologists expound the "newest" theories—that spiritual well-being is of the first importance to physical health. He firmly believed it. He and his less educated Indian associates saw reflected in their way of life a taking-off point for one of our scientific theories, "the fact that Indian babies, brought up in traditional ways, rarely cry or stutter."⁵ There must have been a reason for this, and present-day experts are beginning to discover it.

In a land in which there are to be found more bathtubs than anywhere else in the world, it might come as a surprise to know that the Indians were pioneers in the field of personal hygiene. These primitive natives taught the people of Queen Isabella's court a resounding lesson in this matter. So great seemed the Indians' desire to keep clean that one of Queen Isabella's first instructions to her agents who sought to civilize the Indians in 1503 was: "They are not to bathe as frequently as hitherto."⁵ It seemed to take a while for our early settlers to catch on, for less than two hundred years ago it was a misdemeanor to bathe in Boston unless such an activity was prescribed by a physician.

A famous tourist attraction near Mexico City is an ancient shower bath supposedly used by the Aztecs. It is a subterranean room where an underground stream at one time gushed out of the wall. The Indians simply hewed out a place in the stone where they could recline and let the water run over them!

The next time we go to our city club, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., or athletic club and get into ultra-modern steam baths, let us think for a moment of the primitive Indian who sought health by going to his sweat bath, dropping hot stones into the water, and sweating it out! The sweat lodge used by the Indians was not so palatial as modern clubs, but the principle on which it operated was sound and has not been improved upon.

In this day of remarkable discovery and invention, we might run the risk of being carried away with our own cleverness and ingenuity. Before letting that happen, we should remember the first Americans and measure their achievements with the yardstick of what they had to work with. We might conclude that they have few peers in resourcefulness.

15

Mark Bik'ehgo Hane' YÁ'Át'óehii

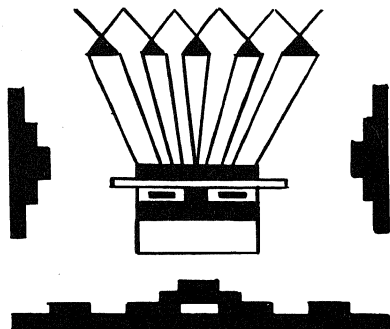
3:30-4:5

t'á. 30 Díidí 'ak'ida'at'chíhí, Nítch'i baq'hági 'át'éii Jesus bíi' sizíí lá, daaníigo baq'h, 'ákó-t'éego bich'i' hadzoodzíi'.

31 'Áádóó hamá 'índa bíi hajííjéé' 'ákwe'é yíkai, 'áádóó t'óodi naazíigo hach'i' yah 'ada-as'a', Hágo, dahamíigo. 32 'Áádóó diné t'óó 'ahayóí honáás'áago 'adahodíiniid, Jó, 'akóq nimá 'áádóó bíi háínjé'ígíí t'óodi níka dantá. 33 'Áádóó 'anáábizhdoo'niidgo 'ábijini, Háishá' shimá 'índa bíi háíjéé'ii danilí? 34 'Áko hanaagi naháaztánígíí bitah dzideezghaalgo 'azhdíiniid, Jó, kóq shimá dóó bíi háíjéé'. 35 T'áá háíida God 'íinízinii bí'jii'ínígíí, 'éi tsilí dóó shilah 'índa shimá dajilí.

Wólta'ii 4

1 'Áádóó Jesus be'ek'id bibaq'hgi nínáázhdí'niitáá, 'áádóó t'óó 'ahojíyóí dahwíízhdoótst'íí biniyé, haa 'átah dzizl'íí, 'áko tsinaa'eel ía' bíih jíyáago bíi' dóó dah dzineesdáh, 'áádóó t'óó 'ahojíyóí 'átah dzizl'íí'ígíí tábaq'hgóó jil'á. 2 'Áádóó lq'ígóó hane' bee 'éédeitijhii bee nazhneeztáá, 'áádóó nazhnitingo 'ábijini, 3 Da'íísóot's'áá'! Jó'akon, k'éé'dídléehii k'idi'dooléelgo ch'íníyá. 4 'Áádóó 'ákódzaago k'i'diléé nt'éé, k'eelyéí ía' 'atiin hót'i'izj'í 'ahineezdee'go tsídii ía' ndahaast'a'go ndayíizl'áá'. 5 'Áádóó



CHAPTER FOUR

They Taught Us to Play

AMERICANS TODAY have earned the reputation for being a fun-loving people who like to play. Long, arduous hours of work have diminished, and carefree hours have lengthened. As a result, many have been hard pressed to find enough to do to fill the idle hours.

Perhaps we might turn again to our Indian predecessors, for in a remarkable way they had learned the art of fun and play, and many of our games and social pastimes are simply refinements of their activities.

One can imagine the amazement expressed by the early arrivals on the new continent as they approached the inhabitants of South America and saw them throwing back and forth and bouncing a small, round object. The newcomers were seeing for the first time a ball made of gum, and they recorded that it rebounded in so lively a way that it appeared to be alive.¹ This same type of ball was later to be used by some of the North

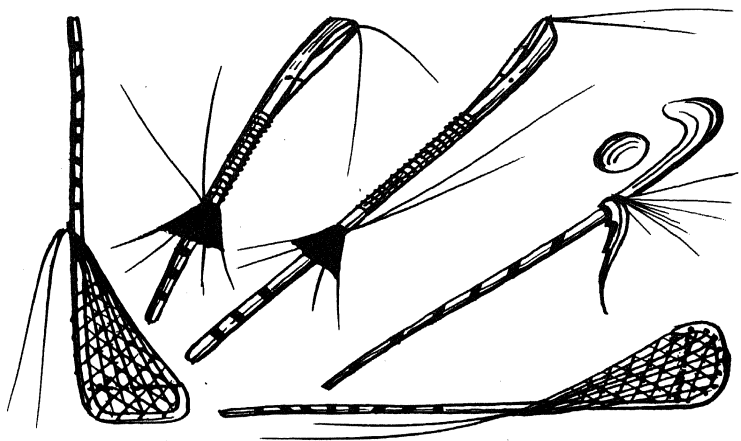
American Indians, particularly those of the Southwest, in a game known as kickball. The balls were sometimes made of stone, but more often they were made of wood and covered with gum. Dr. Ruth Underhill states that the men who had played this game since boyhood often had toenails as thick as a horn. Often this game consisted of several men kicking the ball over a distance of twenty or thirty miles, and some of the men declared they could run faster while kicking a ball than when running without it.²

Perhaps those of us adept at football or soccer might well remember the skill and stamina shown by those who played the game before us.

Who of us cannot recall with great happiness the horseshoe games down by the general store? Here, surely, is something unique on the American scene. But no, our Indian friends enjoyed this game long before it was known as horseshoe—as a matter of fact, long before the Indians knew there were horses! Often they would erect a stone or a corncob upright on the ground and throw flat stones at it, hoping to knock it over. Sometimes mountain goat horns were used.³

Pleasant in the memory of most American men and boys are the winter days spent on the pond or creek playing shinny. "Shinny on your own side" became a familiar phrase in the American language. Few of us, however, have been aware that the game of shinny is an Indian game played years ago by many of the Indian tribes. They often used a ball made of deerskin and a club that was simply a curved stick found growing on a hillside.

Lacrosse, now so popular in our schools and colleges, particularly in the eastern part of our country, is also an Indian game.⁴



The relay races, so thrilling in our high school and college track meets today, are probably no more exciting than were those run by the Indian people long before they ever saw a white man. Many tribes used the idea of the relay, passing a stick from one runner to another, some tribes using the oval track, while others used the shuttle method, running back and forth on a straight track.

Many colleges in America initiate their freshmen into the circles of higher learning through the medium of the tug-of-war across the campus creek or lake. It is fun, but not very original, for the tug-of-war was common among the Indians, especially those of the Northwest. They often used a stout stick or a wild grapevine on which to pull and would draw a line on the ground behind the last person on each side. The side that pulled its opponents across the line won the contest.⁴

One game enjoyed universal popularity among the Indians

of the Southwest, and it is enjoyed today by many who know it as diavolo. It was played with a number of rings strung on a string with a stick fastened to the end. The rings, made of many different materials but usually of squash rinds, were thrown into the air, and the player tried to catch as many as possible on the stick.² Any school child today could make the same fascinating game at no cost.

Even as among Americans today, there were those less interested in active games who preferred their recreation sitting down. One quiet game was very similar to our game of parcheesi, only on a larger scale. A large square of stones was marked on the ground, with the corners cut out. Four men would play—two starting at one corner and two from the opposite one. Each man would use a pebble and move it according to a toss of the dice. These dice were unlike our own, however, being flat sticks painted on one side with designs. As in par-



UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE

A girls' baseball game on the school grounds of the Indian Service school at Fort Wingate, New Mexico.

cheesi, the point of the game was to move around the square to get "home."²

Guessing games were a favorite, and anyone familiar with "button, button, who has the button?" can fully appreciate the Indians' interest in such an activity. Used often as a means of gambling, the Indian version of the button game had many variations, but generally peach seeds, bones, or stones were used. Sides were chosen, and attempts were made to guess in which hand the object was hidden. Frequently this guessing game took the form of hiding a bean on one of four piles of earth and then guessing on which it was. A number of men would play on each side, but only one would do the hiding and one the guessing.²

One of the favorite pastimes in rural Kansas and other plains states is the wolf drive. Young farmers for miles around gather at a stated place, then surround a section of land and start walking toward the center, driving the wolves or coyotes to the central spot, where they are shot or clubbed to death. This same system, with but few changes, was in general use by many tribes of Indians. The Hopi Indians used the idea in reverse. They would form a circle of men; then two or three of the party would go to the center and drive the deer or other game out toward the circle. The southern California Indians made large nets, then drove rabbits and other small game into them, where they were killed with rabbit clubs.³

Even the common game of darts, found in every clubroom and youth center in America, was old business at the time Columbus was endeavoring to raise enough cash to pay the fare to the West. The game has come down to us with but few changes from the Zuñi Indians of the Southwest. They made the darts with sharp sticks, thrusting them into the soft ends of

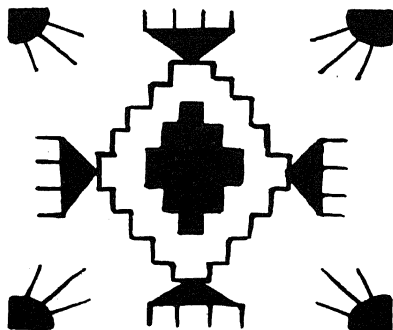
corncobs. The cobs would often have two hawk-tail feathers attached.³

Then there was the old-fashioned husking bee, famous in rural America. It, too, had its counterpart in Indian life. This occasion was always one of the high lights of the Indians' social life. Everywhere families would gather to husk the corn—laughing, joking, and flirting while they sorted the ears by color. In the same way that the farm boy seeks the red ear, which entitles him to kiss the prettiest girl at the party, so the young Indian would seek the ear with no kernels. If he found it, he could chase some girl with it and tease her about how lazy she was.³

Practically every American boy or girl has at some time participated in the Scouting program, but few have stopped to think of the extent to which the Scouting program has incorporated aspects of the Indian cultures. Scarcely a single activity of the Scouting work has not in some way been patterned after Indian customs and lore. Trailing, fire-building, signaling, construction of all types of shelter, using moccasins and canoes, are only a few.

It should also be more generally known that one of the persons largely responsible for the beginning of Scouting was a full-blooded Dakota Indian, Dr. Charles A. Eastman. Dr. Eastman was born in a buffalo-hide tepee in the winter of 1858, the fifth child of a Dakota warrior named Many Lightnings. He was christened Ohiyesa (One Who Wins), and by 1890 had been graduated from Boston University, where he was class orator, with an M.D. degree. After serving many years as a doctor in the government service, he achieved renown as a writer and interpreter of Indian life.

We can't even play without using our rich heritage from the active and fun-loving Indians!



CHAPTER FIVE

Now We Say It This Way

THE NEXT time you blandly chirp "O.K." when giving assent to something, stop a moment to recall that, according to some authorities, you are really talking Choctaw Indian. *Okeh*, in Choctaw, means that two people have come to some agreement.¹

This is just one of hundreds of examples of how Indian names and words have taken a significant place in our language. At least twenty-three of the states in the Union bear some form of an Indian name, often an adaptation, and there is scarcely a county or township in the United States that does not include one or more places bearing Indian names.² Often these names are corruptions of Indian expressions, based on misunderstanding, but there is an unmistakable connection. Milwaukee, Iowa, Wheeling, Massachusetts, Kansas, Dakota, Utah, are but a few examples of the Indian names we have taken and made our own.

How many of us know how Wheeling was named? We are

told that the name was derived from a creek that flowed into the Ohio River. White men began calling it Wheeling Creek, for they had heard something that sounded like that from the Indians. What those Indians were really saying was "Wiling" which meant "place of the head," because, as the Indians reported, "a captive had been put to death there and his head stuck upon a sharpened pole."³

The name Kentucky came from an Indian descriptive expression:

From its openness, as was fitting, the new country was known as Kentucky, not "dark and bloody ground," but in the language of the Iroquois, *kenta-ke*, "meadow land." From the country, the river took its name, and not the reverse, as was customary.³

Even the Rocky Mountains came by their name through Indian influence. As the French explorers passed beyond the Great Lakes region, they came upon the Cree Indians, who had learned from their Assiniboin neighbors to the west about the great mountains:

But in the Algonquian languages *assin* is the general root meaning "stone." The Assinaboins took their name from it, and in later years the English often called them the Stonies. Whether the Crees meant really Stony Mountains or Assinaboin Mountains, the French understood the first. An Indian drew a map on which the name was written in French as the Mountains of the Shining Stones. . . . Because of this, they were sometimes called by the fine name Shining Mountains. But more often the French wrote Montaignes Rocheuses, and the English took this over as Rocky Mountains.³

The years following 1730 saw the French, like the English, filling up the map "with hundreds of little names in all the usual ways. Even more than the English they liked to clip the long

Indian names, saying Pè for Peouarea, Moin for Moingona, Ark for Arkansas, and Ka for Kansas. So it happened that the Kansas River is still commonly called the Kaw, and from a phonetic English spelling of the phrase '*aux Arks*' came Ozark."³

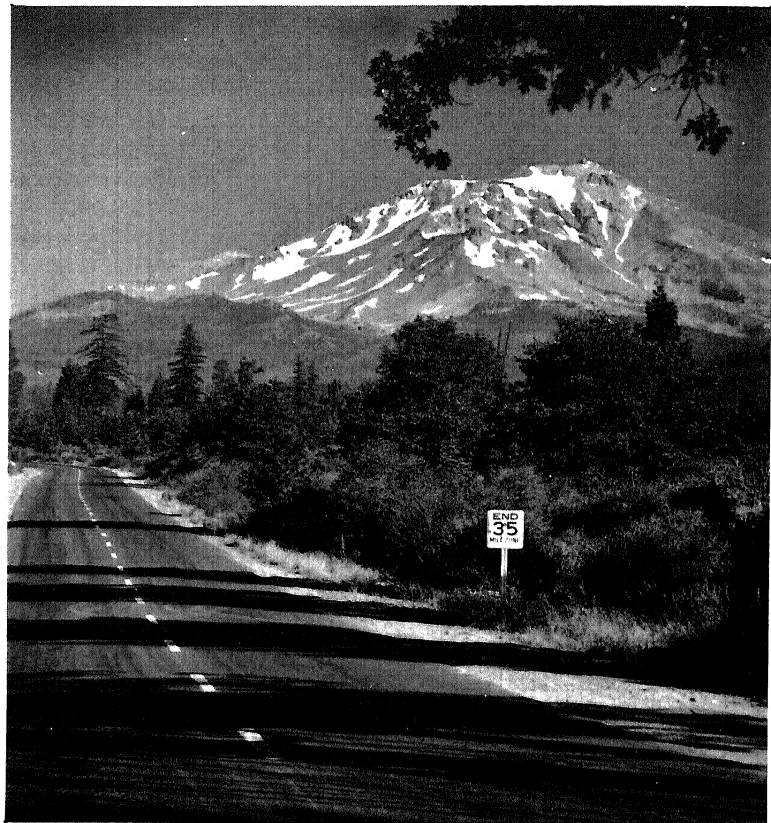
Perhaps no other man had sympathetic feelings toward the Indians equal to those of William Penn:

He was not repulsed by the Indian names of hills and streams, and perhaps by his example they were well preserved in Pennsylvania. In 1683, a century before men began to turn toward the strange and primitive, he wrote the first praise of Indian names, "Octorocken, Rancocas, Ozicton, Shakamacon, Poquerim, all of which are names of places, and have a grandeur in them."³

As one travels over this vast land, whether by super-highway or railroad, the chances are he is traveling an old Indian trail, for the early explorers soon learned that the easiest way to get to the watering places and the lowest mountain passes, across the shallowest streams, to the best camp sites and the best hunting and fishing grounds, was to follow the paths worn by the Indian people who had been there before them. As a result, today we have the Santa Fe Trail, the Oregon Trail, and the Mohawk and Susquehanna Trails.

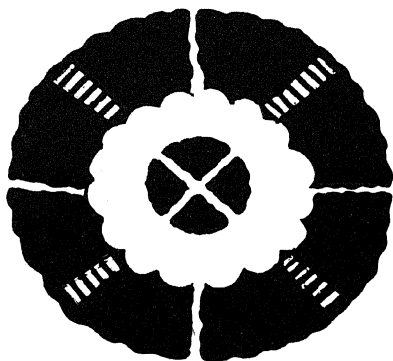
Professor Frederick J. Turner has described the inevitable process:

The buffalo trail became the Indian trail, and this became the traders' "trace"; the trails widened into roads, and the roads into turnpikes, and these in turn were transformed into railroads. The trading posts reached by these trails were on the sites of Indian villages which had been placed in positions suggested by nature; and these trading posts, situated so as to command the water systems of the country, have grown into such cities as Albany, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Council Bluffs, and Kansas City.⁴



EWING GALLOWAY

Modern highways like this one in California near Mt. Shasta follow old, long-traveled Indian trails.



CHAPTER SIX

The World Within

THUS FAR in our account of the Indians' influence upon life as we know it today, we have noted the material, tangible aspects of life—the tools, the gadgets, the more easily seen elements—which, by the very nature of cultural contact, made the first impact on the white man.

However, let us not stop here, for we must explore the realm that is not so readily seen—the world within. The wellsprings of the spirit are especially deep in the Indians' lives. These could not be suppressed by the white man, but flowed forth with such power that they made lasting contributions to American culture.

We must first recognize that not all things in the Indians' lives have been good. There have been shadows, superstitions, and fears that have burdened, and still burden, the Indians. Many traits held sacred and useful in another day now prove detrimental to progress. Submission to tradition often is in the way of advancement. But it must also be said that there are

surviving values that are good, and we as Christians would do well to incorporate them to a greater degree in our lives.

In reviewing positive traits, we must not romanticize and ascribe them to every individual Indian. As noted in Chapter One, we do an injustice by attempting to generalize in the field of racial characteristics. By the same token, care should be taken to credit the Indian, in general, with the many fine characteristics to be named here. A conscious effort will be made to state only those elements found to be fairly common among the various tribes, recognizing that in every instance individuals can be found who fail to measure up to the highest ideals of their tribes, just as such persons can be found in every tribe, race, and faith.

It is not possible to see love and dedication, honesty and integrity. We can only see the manifestations of them. This makes it difficult adequately to describe the great spiritual contributions of the American Indian. They are often overlooked, and when endeavoring to set them forth in a concrete manner we always run the risk of speculation:

Yet it seems that certain basic traits of American life were not brought to this country by the Spanish Conquistadores or the French Voyageurs or the Pilgrims, or the Irish immigrants of the 1850's, or the European immigrants of the 1890's. The first white immigrants found in the native Americans at least two ideals that we like to think of as characteristically and typically American—the first, a personal ideal of physical perfection, courage, and athletic prowess; the second, a social ideal of self-reliance, equality, and democracy.¹

In our highly commercialized and competitive society, we are quick to criticize the Indians' strong sense of generosity and social concern. Such things are central in our Christian concept,

but how far we seem to be from full realization! The life of many an early traveler was sustained because he was always welcome to stay in the Indian home as long as he desired. There was no thought of payment. Naturally, this practice has led to problems. It was hard for the early Indian to understand when such hospitality was not returned, and it is equally hard for the young Indian of today to harmonize his early teachings with the highly competitive society of our time, in which it is good gospel to "lay up for a rainy day."

It was traditional among most of the tribes, but particularly among the Plains Indians, that no one in the village ever went hungry as long as anyone in the camp had meat.

A missionary in Oklahoma told how he created a problem by admiring the milk goat owned by one of his Indian neighbors. The next morning he found the goat tied to his gatepost. His embarrassment was particularly acute in view of the fact that there were many children in the Indian family needing milk! The Indian was simply following the custom of his people, who considered it courteous to give a possession to anyone who admired it.

George Catlin, American artist and traveler, was overjoyed when, during one of his visits to London, a Mr. Melody arrived from America with a medicine show composed of a group of "Ioway" Indians. Among them was one known as Jim (Fast Dancer), who, besides possessing a glib tongue, apparently also had a big, compassionate heart, for he soon noticed the large number of men, women, and children in the pauper houses and almshouses. He induced his fellow-tribesmen to give charity performances for the purpose of raising money for these unfortunate people and for those found in the charity wards of the hospitals.

When the money was raised, the Indian doctor of the medicine show made the presentation before a crowd of Londoners. He pointed out that over two hundred dollars had been given by his group, adding that if the Indians had been as rich as many of the Londoners, the gift would have been much larger and there would no longer be barefooted children running on the cold streets!

Contrary to popular belief, created in large measure by the fact that the histories were written by white men, the Indian should be noted for his scrupulous honesty and kindness. He wanted to adhere to accepted standards of conduct, and he fully expected the white man to do the same. In certain tribes, the definition of honesty was not the same as ours. The moral code of the Dakota, for instance, held that to steal from a member of the tribe was a grave act, but to steal from an enemy was a virtue.

However, it can generally be stated that the honesty and kindness of the Indians were pretty well reflected by Red Iron, at the signing of the Treaty of Traverse de Sioux, in 1851. Red Iron, the chief, was protesting some of the payments claimed by the white men when in eloquent simplicity he laid down a moral code that could well solve many of the problems of our day: "We don't think we owe so much. We want to pay our honest debts but not fraudulent ones. Let the government send investigators to examine the accounts and tell us how much we owe, and whatever they say we will pay."

In a letter written by Mr. J. L. Sherburne of Browning, Montana, to the editor of *Indian Highways*, a Cook Christian Training School news bulletin, is this beautiful tribute to the basic honesty of the Indian people drawn from the writer's personal knowledge of them:

When the Nez Percé Indians were taken prisoners and sent to Indian Territory and placed on the Chikaskia River, they traded with my father, who had an Indian trading post at Ponca [Oklahoma]. During the time they were there, they received a small payment monthly from the government. He extended credit to them as they required it. His records show that he never made a written charge to any Nez Percé Indian and left the responsibility for payment of all the little accounts which were extended to them. He said so far as he knew he never lost a dollar on that credit. When they were released and sent home in the summer of '85, Chief Joseph gave my father the stirrups which he had used in his Indian campaign when they were on the rampage and were finally taken prisoner in the Sweet Grass Hills. I have those stirrups yet, with my father's notation on them that they were given to him by Chief Joseph. He regarded those Indians as a wonderful people.²

When it comes to law and order, again our Indian friends have given us an example hard to follow:

The Plains tribes were generally men of their word, scrupulously honest, and too courageous to rejoice in wanton cruelty. . . . Unless whiskey is flowing, a town of Plains Indians is the most law-abiding community in America. When gangsters have made our cities uninhabitable, there will still be peace and order in Sitting Bull's home town.³

Perhaps to many it may sound strange to refer to the Indian as a kind person. Such people should be reminded that the practice of scalping, for instance, reached its peak only after the white man offered scalp premiums, and the Indian certainly had many lessons in cruelty when he watched his white teachers skinning human bodies, using the skin for powder pouches and bridle reins. It is said that during the war of 1746 it was a white youth who cut off the arms of a slain New Englander for the sake of making for himself a tobacco pouch.⁴

Indians are noted for their kindness, especially to their children, and the early white settlers would often shock the Indians by pulling their children's ears. The latter couldn't understand the terrible cruelty of people who would so abuse their own flesh and blood. "An Indian who punished his own child would have been considered crazy."³

Love and concern for young and old is reflected in a humorous way by a Choctaw writer, Winnie Lewis Gravitt:

FAMILY TREE

The Young Indian

He's like a pine tree
For he is tall and proud
And he is pretty good by himself
He's kinder scared in a crowd.

The Young Girl

She's like a poplar
Slim, quick, and gay
Makes you think of cool breezes
Even on a very hot day.

But the Old Man

He's like a bois d'arc
Hard gnarled and yellow-brown
For he's lived a pretty long time
Now likes to smoke and sit around.

Well, the Old Woman

She's like a cedar tree
Sorta fat and still and low
Her arms are big and her lap is broad
Ain't it too bad it's so?

A revealing instance of the Indian's tendency to kindness came during World War II, when a young Indian soldier wrote home to his parents, saying, "I try to do everything they tell me, but some of it seems awfully bloodthirsty!"

Personal devotion to one another and to duty was the rule rather than the exception. "Guard your tongue in your youth," old Chief Wabashaw advised, "and in age you may mature a thought that will be of service to your people." Service to others, not to himself, was the first lesson a young Indian had to learn. To gain prestige one had to serve the community.

The story of Sacajawea offers an illustration of how personal devotion to duty can drastically change the course of history. Sacajawea, a young Shoshoni woman, had been captured when an infant by the Gros Ventre between Three Forks and Bozeman; today this is on the route of the Northern Pacific Railroad in what is now known as the Crow Indian country. She had been sold to a French-Canadian trapper and fur trader, Toussaint Charbonneau, whom she married by Indian rites.

Soon thereafter the Lewis and Clark expedition came to the Indian villages near the present site of Bismarck, North Dakota, where they wintered, and while there they engaged Sacajawea and her husband to join their party as guides. During the winter encampment, a son was born to the young Indian wife, and in the spring she carried the baby strapped to her back as she set out with the expedition.

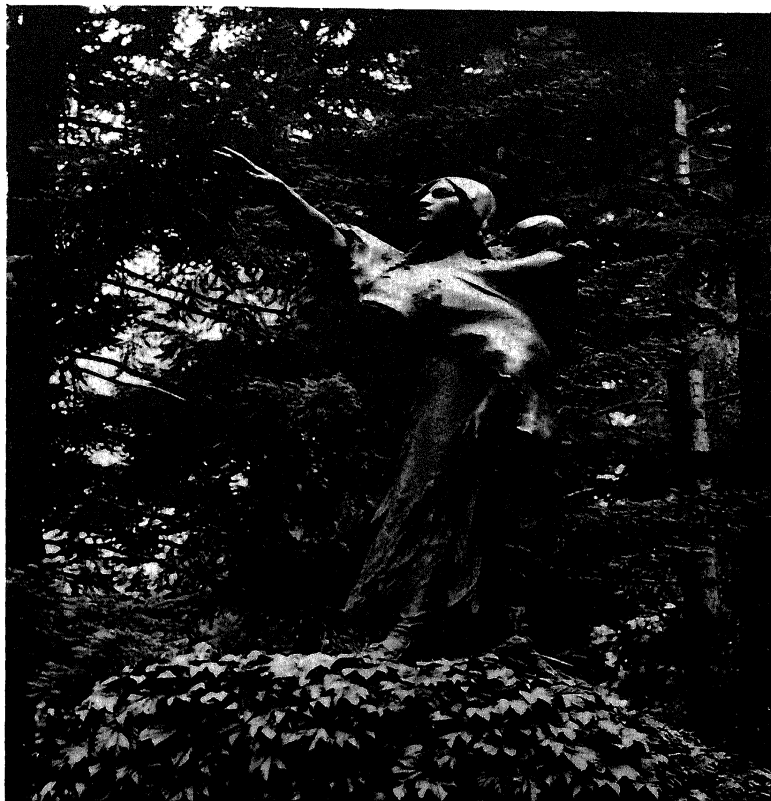
She performed her services as guide with such skill and devotion that many times she saved the entire party from disaster. On one occasion she salvaged valuable instruments and records when the canoe turned over in the rapids, and as Captain Lewis fished her out of the water, he realized more clearly than ever that "Janey" was a woman of such rare qualities as to be un-

matched. Who can predict what the historical developments of America would have been had not Sacajawea found that the Chief of the Shoshoni, through whose country the party was passing, was none other than her own brother, who therefore listened to her earnest pleas that the white men be allowed to proceed.

Her son, Baptiste, is said to have traveled widely and made his own contribution to American life.

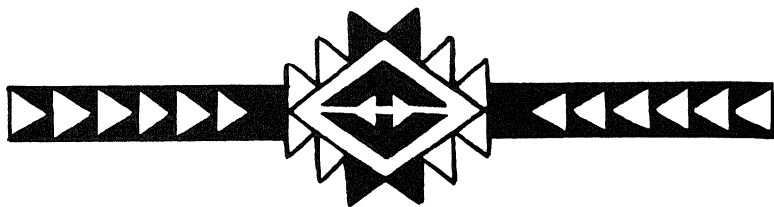
Historians are divided in their opinions regarding the destiny of Sacajawea. Some assert she died while still a young woman about twenty-five years of age and that the Indian woman who appeared at the Shoshoni Agency many years later was an imposter, even though she succeeded in convincing many that she was truly Sacajawea. Others, with equal conviction, claim it was actually Sacajawea who, in the face of personal insult and cruelty by her husband, spent many lonely years in St. Louis, returning at the age of eighty to her own Shoshoni country. Here, they claim, was her crowning glory, for at that time she reportedly was influential in the making of the Treaty of Fort Bridger (1868). The appeal to sign was magnificent, and it should be said that at this point, whoever the Indian woman was who made it, she was indeed a champion for women's rights. At least, she further established the place of women in Indian society and pointed to the fact that women could have a voice in public matters as well as do much of the work.⁵

A sympathetic feeling toward the place of women in human society was beautifully expressed many years later by another Indian woman, Winnie Lewis Gravitt, in writing "The Indian Woman":



EWING GALLOWAY

This striking statue in Portland, Oregon, was erected in honor of Sacajawea, the gallant young Indian woman who acted as guide for the Lewis and Clark Expedition.



The Indian Woman

I am the Indian woman.
I am the planter of seeds,
I am the gatherer of grain.
From my harvest the hungry are fed.
By my teachings the people are reverent.
My heart holds many stories,
And my fingers weave bright pictures.
I am the Indian woman.

I am the breath of romance,
Lingering unforgotten and mystic;
I am the lilt of legend and song.
I am unfathomed and silent,
Tho' my eyes hold timeless wisdom,
My face old memories of pain,
I am the Indian woman.

I am the maker of trails.
In my footsteps a civilization follows.
Over my once silent paths
The traffic of a nation moves,
My campfire drives back the wild animals,
Its smoke blots out the wilderness.
I am the pioneer on every frontier—
Ohoyama sia hoke. (I am the Indian woman).

This thought of the woman as the giver and sustainer of life, as well as the servant of others, was phrased many years ago by Letakots-Lesa (Eagle Chief), one of the four Pawnee chiefs:

In the beginning Tirawa [the Great Mystery or God] gave to man the corn. The corn told man that she is mother—almighty, like Tirawa. If a grain of corn be split, within it will be found a juice like mother's milk. So the corn is mother, because she nourishes. That is why, long ago, woman had all the work of planting. We might, indeed, call all women "mother."⁶

Standing on the Bacone College Campus is a simple granite marker. On it is a short inscription that bears eloquent testimony to the simple devotion of an Indian woman—one who never reached the fame of Sacajawea but who was nonetheless a heroine:

Milly Frances, the daughter of a Creek chief, Hillis Hadjo. During the Florida War of 1817, fifteen-year-old Milly by her pleas saved the life of a young white officer, Duncan McKrimmon, whom they were about to kill. She later declined his offer of marriage. Congress by special act in 1844 awarded her a pension and a medal. She came with the Creeks to Indian Territory, where she died in poverty in May, 1848.

Although Milly Frances remains unknown to the world, her spirit was and is to be found in Indian womanhood, even as in all womanhood, regardless of race, and beautifully reflects the selflessness embodied in the Indian way of life.

What is it in such people that makes them the stalwart individuals they are? "It can be described as the ability to stand fast; the integrity, the fundamental something that lies at the

roots of a race which can be trusted; that something in human character to which you pin your faith.”⁷ Whatever it is can be found in the Indian people, and they have been completely unselfish in passing it on to whoever is willing to take it.

Included among the spiritual inheritance we have received from the Indian is the strong love he has always held for his home and country—a fact behind both his efforts to protect them from an encroaching civilization and his unsurpassed devotion in protecting them through three major world wars. The Indian loved his home and his land, in spite of the common concept of him as a nomad who had little claim upon any of it. Contrary to many ideas, he was not a nomad. Of necessity, he had to leave his home frequently to follow the game, but happy was the homecoming:

Sitting Bull died within twenty miles of his birthplace, and but for a flood which prevented him crossing Grand River, would have built his house on the very spot where he was born. He loved his home country, and fought for it with a stubborn tenacity which has made him memorable among the patriots of all ages.⁸

Out of this love and devotion have come some of the greatest military exploits in our country's history. A short distance north of the small town of White Bird, Idaho, stands a small marker that reads, “Here started the Chief Joseph War, 1877.” But few realize that herein lies the story of one of America's truly great military leaders, a man of all the sterling qualities that we consider great and good, Chief Joseph:

General Sherman paid tribute to him. The war, he wrote, had been “one of the most extraordinary Indian wars of which there is any record.” The Indians had displayed courage and skill . . . they freed captive white women unharmed, did not indiscriminately murder noncombatants. “They fought with almost scientific skill,

using advance and rear guards, skirmish lines, and field fortifications." Howard and Miles both sharply protested the decision to move the Indians south, and both warmly praised Joseph. . . . Miles wrote. . . . "Joseph is a man of more sagacity and intelligence than any Indian I have ever met; he counseled against the war and against the usual cruelties practiced by Indians, and is far more humane than such Indians as Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull."

Joseph showing more charity than his erstwhile enemies deserved, eschewed bitterness. Indians and white alike, he said, faced a great problem of adjustment. . . . "I know," he said, "that my race must change; we cannot hold our own with the white men as we are." . . . And, with unfailing eloquence, he voiced the cry of his people: "Let me be a free man—free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade . . . free to choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to think and talk and act for myself. Give me that freedom," Joseph said, "and I will obey every law, or submit to the penalty."⁸

It has been said that escape into Canada and freedom for Chief Joseph and his Nez Percé band would have been assured had he not been so concerned for the safety and welfare of the large number of women and children in his company. It has also been said that he set such a high standard of military skill that many of his tactics and techniques have been included in the training program of the American military forces.

Incidentally, one of the first times the machine gun, then known as the Gatling gun, was used, it was directed toward the Indian people. It was used against the Métis and their French-Canadian sympathizers by Lieutenant Arthur L. Howard, later known to the Indians as "the friend of the gun," during the Northwest Rebellion of 1885.⁸

No greater proof of devotion and service to mankind is

needed than the unsurpassed military record of those thousands of young Indian men and women who heard the call to arms in the past three major military episodes. Their superb service in World War I was largely responsible for the Congressional action of 1924 declaring Indians to be American citizens. It is said that a very few Indians were drafted in World War II, because they all enlisted ahead of the draft! They excelled in all branches, but especially brilliant was their service in the Signal Corps, because of their use of Indian languages that baffled the enemy decoders.

Highly significant also was the service rendered by the thousands of efficient Indian men and women who, because of their devotion to country and skill of hand, took their places beside their white neighbors in the various war industries.

But the Indians' contributions to human relations ran far deeper than the mere fighting of military battles, and their experiments in cooperative living are pertinent today as the Christian church struggles against great odds in her efforts to bring the kingdom of God into reality among men. Theirs was a deep interest in democracy and human cooperation, and the patterns they cut for us might well be dusted off and put to use. "It is out of a rich Indian democratic tradition that the distinctive political ideals of American life emerged. Universal suffrage for women as well as for men, the pattern of states within a state that we call federalism, the habit of treating chiefs as servants of the people instead of their masters"⁹ are factors that have led students of the Indian life to hold that the very form of our Federal Government was patterned after the great Iroquois Confederacy.

The mighty Iroquois of western New York had as the secret of their power the fact that they had learned to live together—

six nations of them working together as a league of nations. Long before America was the federation she now is, they had proved the workability of such an ideal. It is probable that the framers of our earliest government in America had studied the Iroquois system.

Simple but profound, indeed, is the lesson that has come to us from the Council Ring, where the weighty matters having to do with the welfare of the tribe were openly discussed and decisions reached in open consultation. There were few dictators among the early Indian Americans. There is no question that this fact has had tremendous influence on our way of life.

Mentioned here are but a few of the basic qualities of spirit and character that constitute the moral fiber of any stalwart people and that are found so abundantly in the Indians. Many others could be named. Even a slight understanding of the Indian personality can arouse within us a new appreciation.

In speaking of the Indians, George Catlin wrote in 1868:

I love the people who have always made me welcome to the best they had.

I love a people who are honest without laws, who have no jails and no poorhouses.

I love a people who keep the commandments without ever having read them or heard them preached from the pulpit.

I love a people who love their neighbors as they love themselves.

I love a people who worship God without a Bible, for I believe that God loves them, also.

I love the people . . . who are free from religious animosities. . . .

I love a people who live and keep what is their own without locks and keys.

I love all people who do the best they can. And oh, how I love a people who don't live for the love of money.¹⁰



CHAPTER SEVEN

Religion Was Life

IN ACTUALITY we have already been discussing the vital aspects of the Indians' religions, for it is impossible to speak of *any* aspect of Indian life without having discussed some phase of his religion. Religion was life in its entirety, and the Indian had no inclination to separate them.

Therefore, having spoken of the many admirable traits of character evident in Indian life, we have reviewed the very things to be found at the center of the Indian religions, as well as those stalwart characteristics the Indian finds to be compatible with like elements in Christianity as he accepts it. It is apparent that what we have really done is to enumerate the positive qualities that we know to be Christian qualities, and that, when transferred by the Indian into the Christian framework, beautify and strengthen his Christian convictions. His new faith is enriched when his fine qualities of character, having been discovered to be not foreign after all, are utilized, encouraged, nurtured, and

transplanted into the Christian way of life, to the end that the Indian may partake with us of that added element of hope that the Christian faith has to offer. We, in turn, may increase in Christian stature because of his unique spirituality.

Where the propagation of Christianity has been most successful among the Indians, it has been in places where full use was made of those natural religious elements already present in the Indian life. "Not by repudiating their heritage, but by using the strengths both of the past and the present, can they continue to grow."¹

Of course, not all things Indian have been good or have made direct contributions to Christianity. Many of the elements in Indian life have been unpleasant and degrading and certainly can serve no purpose in the Christian approach to life. It must also be pointed out that there are many aspects of the Indian religions, at times mistakenly considered pre-Christian, that are in reality projections of the early Christian influences on Indian life, which have to some extent become incorporated in the religion followed by the Indian.

In the Native American Church, or Peyote Cult, for instance, the name Jesus is frequently heard as prayers are uttered, and the open Bible is always found in the center of the circle of worshipers. This fact is further illustrated in the existence today of a small, weather-beaten church on the Kickapoo Reservation near Horton, Kansas. It is known as the Kennekuk Church, named after Chief Kennekuk, who came under the early influence of Methodist and Roman Catholic missionaries. He came to be known as Kennekuk the Prophet after he had developed his own version of Christianity, an unusual blending of aboriginal and Christian beliefs.

At the same time, however, it must be recognized that there

are many significant and striking parallels in the Indian religions and the Christian faith, which have and should continue to serve as marvelous bridges over which the Indian people find a passage into a new and meaningful faith. These we hope to discuss a little later.

It must be reaffirmed that there are many admirable qualities of the Indian as embodied in his religion; his sense of perception and dignity, his spirit of prayer and humility, his broad sense of responsibility to his fellowmen, his basic honesty and integrity are qualities that bolster and strengthen the Christian faith when transferred to it. The Christian faith is immeasurably richer because the Indian people have so beautifully reflected these basic Christian characteristics.

Wise beyond measure is the religious teacher who sees in each outward expression of Indian ritual its inner grace of spiritual aspiration, and like St. Paul, tells the story of the Unknown God whom they strive to know. . . . "We were like the Hebrews of old," said a Christian Indian, "before we learned of Christianity. We had our laws and our teachings, but we did not know of the love of Jesus."¹

Mention was made of the similarities between many aspects of the Indians' religions and those of the Christian faith, which stand as a bridge over which transition may become easier and more natural. What are some of them?

In approaching the Indians from our Christian viewpoint and sharing with them our book of *Genesis*, we find it much easier when we discover that many of the Indian tribes had their creation stories, too, some of them amazingly similar to those of the Christian faith. Here is a bit of Ojibway verse that not only reveals their conception of how the world began, but also reflects the Indians' ability beautifully to express much in few words:

At first, forever, lost in space, everywhere, the Great Manito was.
He made the extended land and the sky.
He made the sun, the moon, the stars.
He made them all to move evenly.
Then the wind blew violently, and it cleared, and the water flowed
off far and strong.
And groups of islands grew newly, and there remained.
Anew spoke the great Manito, a manito to manitos,
To beings, mortals, souls and all,
And ever after he was a manito to men and their grandfather.²

The storytellers of the tribes relate many instances of their gods reaching down into the daily lives of the people and directing them. The people hold dear many stories of a great flood. From the Papago and Pima people comes this account:

In the beginning, Earthmaker made the earth out of a little ball of dirt. He danced on it, and it spread and touched the edges of the sky. Then there was a great noise and out sprang another being whose name was Itoi (pronounced Eetoy). Itoi and Earthmaker together put the world in shape. The Coyote, who had been in the world from the beginning, helped them. People came into the world, too, but they were not the right kind, so the two gods decided to destroy them with a flood. They did so, and they and the Coyote agreed that when the waters went down, whichever of them came out first from hiding should be elder brother. . . . It was Itoi who gained this title and who has been elder brother to the people ever since. He made new people out of clay and taught them all the things they now do. Earthmaker was angry that Itoi had got ahead of him, so he sank through the earth and disappeared.³

Chief Maza Blaska, one of the oldest chiefs of the Oglala band of the Dakota, tells us:

From Wakan-Tanka, the Great Mystery, comes all power. It is from Wakan-Tanka that the Holy Man has wisdom and the power to heal and to make holy charms. Man knows that all healing plants are given by Wakan-Tanka; therefore are they holy. So, too, is the buffalo holy, because it is the gift of Wakan-Tanka. The Great Mystery gave to man all things for their food, their clothing, and their welfare. And to man he also gave the knowledge how to use these gifts—how to find the holy healing plants, how to hunt and surround the buffalo, how to know wisdom. For all comes from Wakan-Tanka—all.⁴

In all instances there was a close relationship to that Force through prayer and supplication, and beautiful indeed were many of the prayers offered:

A Dakota Prayer

Grandfather, Great Spirit, you have always been, and before you nothing has been. There is no one to pray to but you. The star nations all over the heavens are yours, and yours are the grasses of the earth. You are older than all need, older than all pain and prayer.

Grandfather, Great Spirit, all over the world the faces of living ones are alike. With tenderness have they come up out of the ground. Look upon your children, with children in their arms, that they may face the winds and walk the good road to the day of quiet.

Grandfather, Great Spirit, fill us with the light. Give us the strength to understand and eyes to see. Teach us to walk the soft earth as relatives to all that live.

Help us, for without you we are nothing.

To this element of prayer must be added a deep sense of devotion and humility, elements that hold a central place in Christianity. The Indian was humbled by a sense of submission to a

power outside himself. He called it many things, often stood in awe and fear of it, often attempted to appease it, but nonetheless he took it into every phase and corner of his existence. Whether it was known as the Great Spirit, the Tah-Koo Wakan, or Wakan-Tanka, or Great Mystery, or Tirawa the Father Above, or Manito, it meant that he was not living alone, that he was walking with this power when he went on the hunt, when he faced danger, when he planted and harvested, when he wooed and when he mourned.

The Morning Star and the Evening Star, the Sun and the Moon, are deeply revered by the Pawnees. . . . But highest of all, the Pawnees hold the Ruler, Atius Tirawa, the Father Above, him whom they have always known and recognized—a being omniscient, spiritual, supreme. Tirawa made the Morning Star and the Evening Star, and he made all lesser spiritual beings to carry out his commands. Say the Pawnees, “Of Tirawa himself we know only that he made all things, that he is everywhere and in everything, and that he is almighty.”⁴

So we see good reason for the statement by Bishop Hugh L. Burleson of South Dakota in speaking to the sessions of the Home Missions Council back in 1920: “I believe the Indians are a far more naturally religious people than the white men. I believe the Almighty God has his hardest job with the Anglo-Saxons!” He then went on to say, “I have never seen an Indian who was not a believer in God.”

Naturally, we must accept this as a generalization, and in that sense it is true. There are exceptions to be found among the Indians as in any other group of people. To say, “All Indians are religious” requires qualification, as does the statement, “All Indians are honest—or dishonest, industrious—or lazy, mean—

or kind." But in a real sense it must be said that, on the whole, they have always been a truly religious and idealistic people.

True, theirs was a rather peculiar type of religion, as measured in the light of certain religious concepts held by altogether too many people today, for it permeated *all* of life. Standing in awe before the mysteries of the unknown, the Indian measured all his actions against the wishes of this great power.

Through all the life of the race, religion has been as essential to well-being as food and water, for spiritual forces permeate the whole of life on the face of the earth and sustain the life of the people. The trees and the seeds, the animals, the wind, all earthly life share with man the mysterious source of life. . . . Even the days of the week, the Maya believed, were once gods, and so not to be considered lightly.¹

Yes, religion permeated much of life, whether for good or for bad.

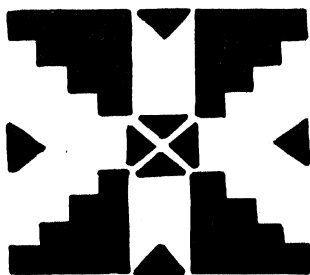
The Indian was a man of prayer, a believer in his own inadequacy, and a firm advocate of the universality of religion. Being such a man, he found it impossible to separate religion from a single one of the aspects of his daily life. It should, then, not come as any surprise to us when we find him incorporating his religious faith and practice in all forms of his expressions and activities—his music, his literature, his orations and stories, his art, and his leadership. These areas of life were permeated with his entire philosophy in the days of his grandfathers, and they continue to be today.

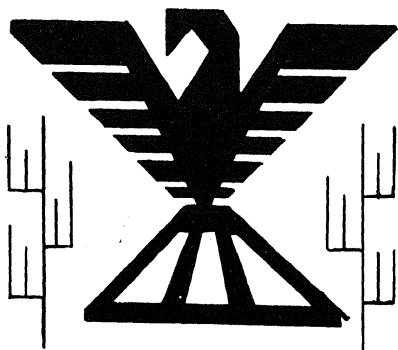
The Indian goes about his daily living somewhat baffled and even amused at the hectic ways of the white man's world. Yet he continues, in his quiet, consecrated way, to contribute to the society in which he lives from his deep wells of spiritual re-

sources and power. The Indians are a small island in a broad sea, less than 400,000 among 150,000,000 people, and their influence is indicative of the amazing power possible for a few among many.

Though we know that the Christian faith has infinitely much to add to the enrichment of the Indians' lives, we can never fully extend it to the Indian people unless we appreciate the fine elements of their traditional religions and realize the contributions they can make in helping us to experience our faith more deeply.

Let us look into these areas and see wherein the Indian spoke to his day and ours, tremendously enriching the whole of life for us who stand so much in his debt.





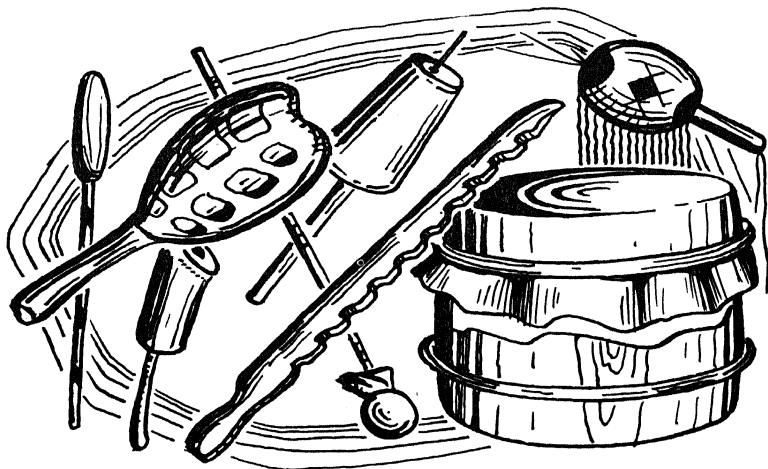
CHAPTER EIGHT

Music—The Voice God Heard

Music enveloped the Indian's individual and social life like an atmosphere. There was no important personal experience where it did not bear a part, nor any ceremonial where it was not essential to the expression of religious feeling. The songs of a tribe were coextensive with the life of the people. This universal use of music was because of the belief that it was a medium of communication between man and the unseen. The invisible voice could reach the invisible power that permeates all nature. . . . The Indian appealed to this power through song.¹

Singing meant only one thing to the Indian: it was a means of pouring out his feelings and was never a means of performing for an audience.

The Indians are, and always have been, a musical people, and a truly beautiful and enchanting music theirs is! Seldom if ever does one hear tunes by instruments, but rather by voice, with the rhythmic accompaniment of a rattle or drum. Many



feel the Indian's rhythmic music to be a truly significant contribution, especially to our rhythm-conscious generation, for in this field he truly excels. So unique is his rhythm that he often feels that "the rhythm of the white man, the same in every line, is too simple to be interesting."²

So important was rhythm in the Indian's life that he invented a number of rhythmic instruments. These were generally some type of rattle made of clam or turtle shells with pebbles inside, a drum, or a number of deer hooves attached to a stick.³ The Papago of Arizona created a unique instrument not a total stranger to modern bands:

They used a kind of drum, which was nothing more than a bowl-shaped basket turned upside down. Against it they rested a long stick, carved with notches for the whole of its length. Then another stick was rubbed up and down the notches, making an exciting rattling sound such as is heard in modern bands.⁴

Although such creations are basic and interesting and have in many instances remained but little changed, occasionally a young Indian will come up with what he considers an improvement. The Indian Club in one of our larger government boarding schools was performing one day for some visitors. In the traditional stomp dance, a girl took her place far up in the line immediately behind the leader. Attached to her ankles and legs were many rattles such as mentioned above, and as the line weaved about it was her task to beat her heels on the ground, creating an enchanting rhythm. One of the bystanders questioned her about these rattles, and much to her fellow-students' amusement, she said, "The old Indians used clam shells, but we find that Pet Milk cans will make more noise."

Music permeated all of Indian life. Indians sang when the crops were planted; they sang when they were harvested. The wedding was a time for feasting and singing; and when death came, it was a time to sing. They sang before the hunters went out, and they sang in thanksgiving for the game when the hunters returned. When the warriors went out to the wars it was a time for singing, and certainly it was when they came back. Indeed, music was the means by which they communicated to the Power outside themselves.

Listen to the Iroquois as he speaks to the Great Spirit:

You the All-maker,
Above-all-high
Best Friend of people!
We ask you to help us!
We implore your favor!
I have spoken.⁵

From "*The Iroquois Ritual of Fire and Darkness*,"
by Harriet Maxwell Converse

The Dakota hunter returns from his hunt, and he has been successful. So he raises his voice in song:

Something I've killed, and I lift up my voice;
Something I've killed, and I lift up my voice;
The northern buffalo I've killed, and I lift up my voice;
Something I've killed, and I lift up my voice.⁵

From "*The Dakota Hunting Songs*," by Stephen Return Riggs

The Navaho is making ready to go into battle, and central in such preparation is his singing:

Now, Slayer of the Alien Gods, among men am I.
Now among the alien gods with weapons of magic am I.
Rubbed with the summits of the mountains,
Now among the alien gods with weapons of magic am I.
Now upon the beautiful trail of old age,
Now among the alien gods with weapons of magic am I.⁵

From "*Protection Song*," by Washington Matthews

The great mysteries of the creation and the concern of the gods for the welfare of mankind could only be fully understood and appreciation could be expressed only in song. And so they sang. Here is the Pima song of the flood, revealing the part played by Elder Brother as the cause of the flood and by Earth Doctor as a prophet:

(Chanted by the people)

Dazzling power has Elder Brother,
Mastering the winds with song.
Swiftly now we come together,
Singing to gain control.

(Earth Doctor prophesied the flood)

Weep, my unfortunate people!

All this you will see take place.

Weep, my unfortunate people!

For the waters will overwhelm the land.

Weep, my unhappy relatives!

You will learn all.

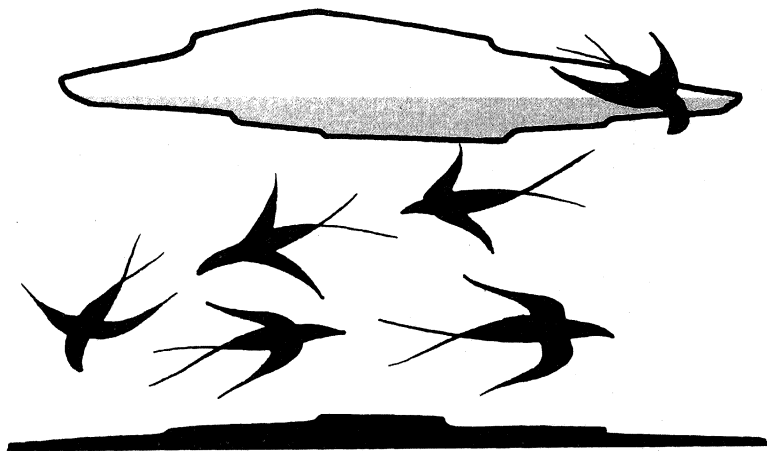
Weep, my unfortunate relatives!

You will learn all.

The waters will overwhelm the mountains.⁵

From "*The Pima Ritual Song Cycle, the Flood*," by

Frank Russell



But for sheer beauty of expression and depth of genuine religious feeling, who can match the songs of the Navaho as he prays to the Mountain Spirit:

Lord of the Mountain,
Reared within the mountain
Young Man, Chieftain,
Hear a young man's prayer!
Hear a prayer for cleanness.
Keeper of the strong rain,
Drumming on the mountain;
Lord of the small rain
That restores the earth in newness;
Keeper of the clean rain,
Hear a prayer for wholeness.

Young Man, Chieftain,
Hear a prayer for fleetness.
Keeper of the deer's way,
Reared among the eagles,
Clear my feet of slothness.
Keeper of the paths of men,
Hear a prayer for straightness.

Hear a prayer for courage.
Lord of the thin peaks,
Reared amid the thunders;
Keeper of the headlands
Holding up the harvest,
Keeper of the strong rocks
Hear a prayer for staunchness.

Young Man, Chieftain,
Spirit of the Mountain!⁶

"Prayer to the Mountain Spirit," translated by Mary Austin

One can think of a great many Christians today who might well pray the following prayer and who would probably have a hard job expressing it as beautifully as does this Navaho:

In beauty may I walk.
All day long may I walk.
Through the returning seasons may I walk. . . .
With beauty may I walk.
With beauty before me, may I walk.
With beauty behind me, may I walk.
With beauty above me, may I walk.
With beauty below me, may I walk.
With beauty all around me, may I walk.
In old age wandering on a trail of beauty,
 lively, may I walk.
In old age wandering on a trail of beauty,
 living again, may I walk.
It is finished in beauty.
It is finished in beauty.⁵

From "*A Prayer*," by Washington Matthews

Again in sorrow and depression, the Indians turned to song.
The Paiute sang:

Now all my singing dreams are gone
But none knows where they are fled
Nor by what trail they have left me.
Return, O dreams of my heart,
And sing in the summer twilight,
By the creek and the almond thicket
And the field that is bordered with lupines!⁷

From "*A Song in Time of Depression*," translated by
Mary Austin

The enchanting minor key of Indian music, almost always sung as choruses or solos and seldom if ever in parts, has had its influence on non-Indian music. Perhaps no more beautiful example can be found than "The Indian Christmas Carol," included here, also known as "The Huron Carol." It was the first Canadian Christmas carol—and probably the first carol of the New World. It is perhaps the most representative of all the Canadian folk songs, for it symbolizes a triple heritage: it was written in the Huron language to a French tune and is today widely known through its English translation.

THE INDIAN CHRISTMAS CAROL⁸

Like a march, not too fast

Gm Dm Gm Dm Gm Dm

1. 'Twas in the moon of win-ter-time when all the birds had
2. With - in a lodge of bro-ken bark the ten-der Babe was
3. O children of the for-est free, o sons of Man-i -

mf

Play left hand like a bass drum, but softly.

Gm Dm Gm Dm

fled, that might-y Gitch-i - man-i - tou sent
found, a rag-ged robe of rab-bit skin en -
tou, the Ho - ly Child of earth and heav'n is

Gm Dm Gm E^b C Cm⁶

an - gel choirs in - stead. Be - fore their light the stars grew dim and
wrapped His beau - ty round. The chiefs from far be - fore Him knelt with
born to - day for you. Come kneel be - fore the ra - diant boy who

Gm Dm Gm Dm Gm

won - d'ring hunt - ers heard the hymn: -
gifts of fox and bea - ver pelt: - Je - sus, your king, is born,
brings you beau - ty peace and joy. -

Gm. Dm Gm Dm Gm

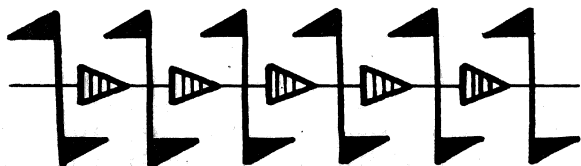
Je - sus is born in ex - cel - sis glo - ri - a.

The words are believed to have been composed by Father Jean de Brebeuf, a Jesuit missionary who worked among the Huron Indians from 1626 to 1649. (The Huron country stretched between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay, about fifty

miles northwest of Toronto.) Using the tune of a sixteenth century French carol, "Une Jeune Pucelle" (A Young Maiden), Father Brebeuf told the Christmas story in terms the Indians would understand, speaking of Jesus as the Great Spirit and of the Wise Men as three chiefs.

His carol was probably sung first in 1641 or 1642, and thereafter each Christmas until 1649. In that year the Iroquois invaded Huronia, killing or driving out the Hurons and torturing Father Brebeuf at the stake. Some of the Hurons escaped to Loretto, near Quebec, and it was from their descendants that another Jesuit, Father de Villeneuve, heard the carol and wrote it down about a century later. Then it was translated into French under the title, "Jésus est né," and sung in that form in Quebec. In 1926 a Canadian poet, J. E. Middleton, wrote the English words, which are an interpretation rather than a literal translation of the original.

What a wonderful experience it would be for every person in America if he could worship in a prairie chapel with the Dakota, in a camp meeting with the Oklahoma Choctaw or



Creek, or beneath a brush shelter in Navaho land and hear those Indian people sing many of the great Christian hymns that have been translated into their own language. It is an inspiration to witness the rapt joy on their faces as they express love for God through a medium they know so well, music.

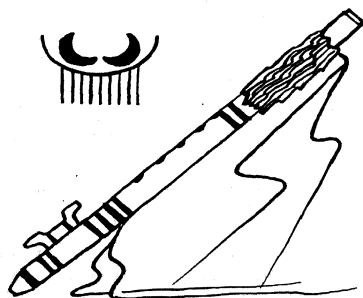
To one who has grown up in the church and has sung these Christian hymns all his life, it seems a certainty that no one can sing them quite so beautifully and with such deep feeling as do the Indian people. No more majestic music will ever be produced than that sung by the Choctaw, for instance, who have excelled in catching the richness of overtones and deep bass sustaining notes in "Hymn 112" and "Hymn 36."⁹

From the Dakota come many beautiful hymns; some of them are translations of our traditional hymns but others are original compositions based upon scriptural passages. Such is a greatly beloved hymn, "Abide with Me," based on Psalm 22:

Wakantanka kin owancaya un,
I snana hin owasin adonye un;
Tona tancanku kin omanipi,
Hena waste wicakidake kta.

Wakantank awanmahdaka ye;
Woahtani ehna waun, heon
Niole iyomakipi kte;
Micate kin miciyuteca ye.

Kakis waun kin he sdonayaye cin
Nita woahope owanuni;
Nitoksapi ionsimada ye,
Minagi kin he en nimayan ye.¹⁰



From the Dakota also has come this beautiful hymn by John B. Reville, sung to the tune of "Nettleton":

1. Wotanin waste nahon po,
Jesus he waihdusna:
Towaosida kin tanka,
He dehan iyomahi.

Chorus—

Jesus Christ wasteewadaka,
Jesus Christ nimayan:
Han, wastewadake amatonwa
Is eya wastemada.

2. Wohtani kin ecamon,
Hduha Jesus siha en,
Kun iwahpamda waceya,
Jesus onsimada ce.

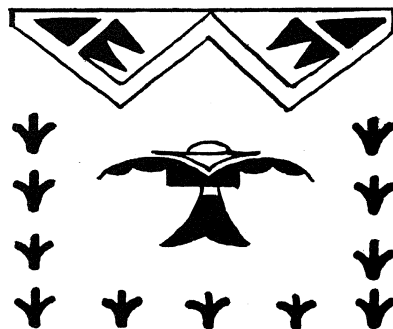
Translation by Mrs. Emma Tibbetts, Dakota Indian

1. Hear the good news
Jesus has given himself for sacrifice
His great kindnesses
Have been available to me.

Chorus—

Jesus Christ, I love thee.
Jesus Christ has saved me.
Yes, I love him. Look on me,
He loves me, too.

2. The sins which I commit,
I bring to the feet of Jesus
I prostrate myself and cry.
Jesus has compassion on me.



CHAPTER NINE

Deep Feeling Must Be Expressed

THE INDIAN is a natural poet, and he has always used the medium of poetry to speak of spiritual things, of his gods and all they mean to men. In reading what the Indian writes, one can only come to a fuller appreciation of his love for God, his keen observation of God's workings about him, his refreshing imagination, his love for symbolism, and his deep sense of beauty.

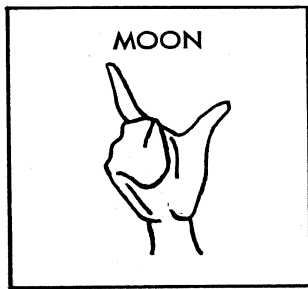
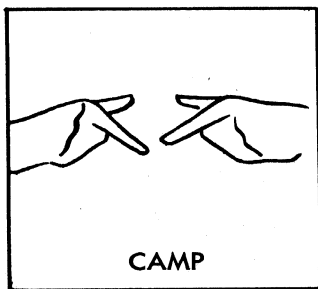
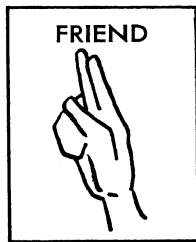
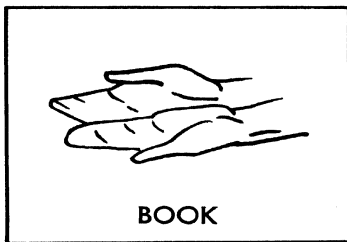
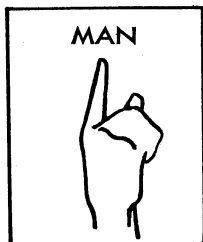
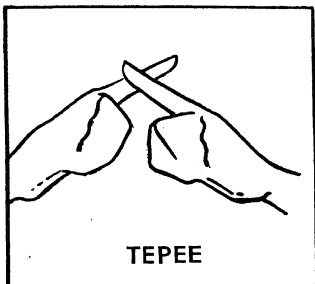
The early Indian, feeling as he did about the spiritual aspects of life and the magnificence of the universe, had the urge to express himself, and that drive could never be suppressed. Whether by picture writing on the canyon walls, the use of the sign language, marvelous and moving orations, or creative writings comparable to the greatest in literary history, the Indian expressed himself as an expert.

Any tourist is familiar with the picture writings found in many parts of our Indian country, particularly the great South-

west. We stand in amazement before them, wondering what those primitive people were attempting to portray, possibly feeling a bit of sympathy for their limited knowledge and ability. How astounding it is, then, when many of those same tourists may be seen in any block of any city in America wearing what in modern lingo is known as a "squaw" skirt, which is covered with many of the same pictures seen on the cave walls. No doubt many an Indian would be completely overwhelmed to see such a use made of his early creations, but there they are, just the same! On the other hand, the women of today might be surprised and interested if they knew what many of those ancient symbols really mean.

In the summer of 1954, there appeared in one of the great newspapers of the Midwest a feature article picturing the many so-called Indian designs found on the "squaw" skirts, along with an explanation of their supposed meanings. Such things as the rain symbol promising good crops, the sky band leading to happiness, a mountain range signifying high points in life, sun rays indicating constancy, and the thunderbird symbolizing great happiness, were mentioned as among the more popular designs. These cannot be accepted as necessarily authentic, but the fact that the story appeared is interesting in that it reflects a certain Indian influence over a bit of Americana in the fashion world of today.

A fascinating and important element in the early American scene was the Indian sign language. Contrary to many beliefs, the sign language came into usage not so much as an effort to communicate with the white man, although it became extremely helpful in that way, but through the necessity to communicate with those of other Indian tribes. The Dakota, wandering to the south, would come into contact with the Apache or some



other tribe who spoke a foreign language, and he would have to resort to the use of signs. One can only marvel at the simplicity but astounding effectiveness of such signs.

It takes but little effort on our part to see the many ways in which the Indian has played the major role as the *subject* of many literary works, many of them not too complimentary. So frequently is this fact observed that many are apt to think that was his sole role in the literary field:

It is . . . not surprising to learn that many of the early American dramatic plays involved Indian subjects or plots, and often interpreted the Indian as "the child of nature." . . . Among novelists and poets who have used the Indian as a subject may be mentioned James Fenimore Cooper, Gustave Aimard, Washington Irving, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Francois Rene de Chateaubriand, Adelbert von Chamisso, and Joaquin Miller.¹

It is too bad that more of these writers did not realize that the Indian, contrary to many notions about him, was not a child of nature, but rather a man of the world in which he lived and one who incessantly tried to do something about the world, not so much by trying to control it as by bringing himself into harmony with it.

The Indian has not been content to remain a mere subject for literary efforts, but in his own right has had much to say and an unsurpassed way of saying it. Few compositions have excelled in majesty, forcefulness, and meaning the words of Charles Journeycake, chief of the Delaware:

We have been broken up and moved six times. We have been despoiled of our property. We thought when we moved across the Missouri River and had paid for our homes in Kansas we were safe, but in a few years the white man wanted our country. We had

good farms, built comfortable houses and big barns. We had schools for our children and churches where we listened to the same gospel the white man listens to. The white man came into our country from Missouri and drove our cattle and horses away, and if our people followed them, they were killed. We try to forget these things, but we would not forget that the white man brought us the blessed gospel of Christ, the Christian's hope. This more than pays for all we have suffered.²

In remarking about this, one of our present-day Indian educators said, "Such beauty and force could not be excelled by Hosea and would tax the efforts of St. Paul."³

Such pride and majestic expression is also to be found in a present-day oration by a young Indian, now in a place of Christian leadership among the Indian people:

I AM AN INDIAN

Born here ages before the White Man came, we had the entire country to ourselves, its lakes, streams, forests, mountains, and game of all kinds. We were a happy and carefree people. Our school was the great out-of-doors, and Mother Nature was our teacher.

We saw the Great Spirit in the starry heavens—his painting in the glories of the sunset. We loved the green carpet of the plains decorated with the colors of countless flowers, we worshiped him in the majesty of rugged mountains topped with snow, in the sun and moon, and in great animals like the bear and birds like the eagle. He was everywhere.

We wondered about him when lightning flashed. We trembled when we heard his voice in the boom of the thunder. We were touched when a star fell and bewildered when meteors sprayed the sky with fire and even once when we saw a longtailed comet which we did not understand.

Then the White Man came. Some righteous and godly men of your people answered our questions and told us about the true God. These good men taught us that this God was our Creator, and Maker of all. They told us about Jesus, the Godman, and now some of us are Christians, too.

Will you help train us, so that in our own language and in our own way we can share these joys with our own people until they all have a chance to learn English?

I am an Indian, and I want my people to know him who is our Master and our true Great Spirit Father. You will help us, won't you?⁴

Compare the eloquence and depth of spirit found in the words of Hiamovi (High Chief), chief among the Cheyenne, with some of the other sometimes feeble attempts we find today:

Long ago the Great Mystery caused this land to be, and made the Indians to live in this land. Well has the Indian fulfilled all the intent of the Great Mystery for him. . . .

Once, only Indians lived in this land. Then came strangers from across the Great Water. No land had they; we gave them of our land. No food had they; we gave them of our corn. The strangers are become many and they fill all the country. They dig gold—from my mountains; they build houses—of the trees of my forests; they rear cities—of my stones and rocks; they make fine garments—from the hides and wool of animals that eat my grass. None of the things that make their riches did they bring with them from beyond the Great Water; all comes from my land, the land the Great Mystery gave unto the Indian.

And when I think upon this I know that it is right, even thus. In the heart of the Great Mystery it was meant that stranger-visitors—my friends across the Great Water—should come to my land; that I should bid them welcome; that all men should sit down with me

and eat together of my corn. It was meant by the Great Mystery that the Indian should give to all peoples.

But the white man never has known the Indian. It is thus: there are two roads, the white man's road and the Indian's road. Neither traveler knows the road of the other. Thus ever has it been, from the long ago, even unto today. . . . When I think, I know that it is in the mind of the Great Mystery that white men and Indians who fought together should now be one people.

There are birds of many colors—red, blue, green, yellow—yet it is all one bird. There are horses of many colors—brown, black, yellow, white—yet it is all one horse. So cattle, so all living things—animals, flowers, trees. So men: in this land where once were only Indians are now men of every color—white, black, yellow, red—yet all one people. That this should come to pass was in the heart of the Great Mystery. It is right thus. And everywhere there shall be peace.⁵

A poem revealing the Indian's concern for people and reflecting a genuine and deep appreciation for them is this expression of another Indian writer, Juanita Bell:

LITTLE INDIANS SPEAK

People said, "Indian children are hard to teach.
Don't expect them to talk."
One day stubby little Roy said,
"Last night the moon went all the way with me,
When I went out to walk."

People said, "Indian children are very silent.
Their only words are no and yes."
But small, ragged Pansy confided softly,
"My dress is old, but at night the moon is kind;
Then I wear a beautiful moon-colored dress."

People said, "Indian children are dumb.

They seldom make a reply."

Clearly I hear wee Delores answer,

"Yes, the sunset is so good. I think God is throwing
A bright shawl around the shoulders of the sky."

People said, "Indian children have no affection.

They just don't care for anyone."

Then I feel Ramon's tiny hand and hear him whisper,

"A wild animal races in me since my mother sleeps
under the ground.

Will it always run and run?"

People said, "Indian children are rude.

They do not seem very bright."

Then I remember Joe Henry's remark,

"The tree is hanging down her head because the
sun is staring at her. White people always stare.

They do not know it is not polite."

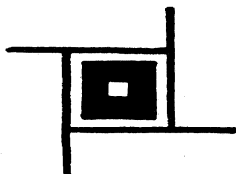
People said, "Indian children never take you in.

Outside their thoughts you'll always stand."

I have forgotten the idle words that People said,

But treasure the day when iron doors swung wide,

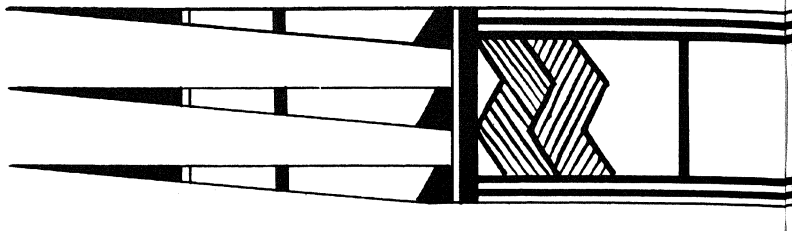
And I slipped into the heart of Pima Land.⁶





JOSEF MUENCH

The past promises its gifts to the future of Navaho children as the Indian people seek to find their distinctive place in the America of the present.



This beautiful little poem by a Choctaw Indian woman beautifully portrays the Indian's deep sense of responsibility to others:

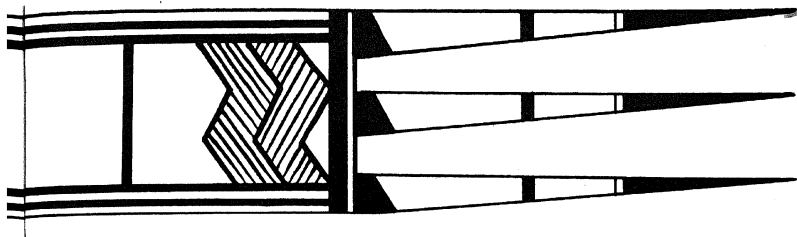
NOSTALGIA

I try to sing of the ocean's blue,
Of the sound of the surf at morn;
But I see a stretch of green corn rows,
Hear the thud of a faint tom-tom.

I try to sing of the noble trees,
Their arms lifted upward high;
I see only clumps of blackjack oaks,
The moss-covered rocks nearby.

I try to sing of lofty peaks,
Of mountains piled with snow;
I see only sunsets from red clay hills
And the purple afterglow.

I try to sing with a mighty voice,
Sagas old and proud and grand;
I only sing in a thin clear wail,
As I clasp my brother's hand.⁶



An anonymous writer has contributed to American literature through the Indian's version of the Twenty-third Psalm. This psalm is often repeated while an Indian interprets it in the sign language, and it is a most impressive thing to hear and see.

AN INDIAN VERSION OF THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

The Great Father above a Shepherd Chief is. I am his, and with him I want not. He throws out to me a rope, and the name of the rope is love, and he draws me to where the grass is green and the water not dangerous, and I eat and lie down and am satisfied.

Sometimes my heart is very weak and falls down, but he lifts me up again and draws me into a good road.

His name is "Wonderful." Sometimes, it may be very soon, it may be a long, long time, he will draw me into a valley. It is dark there, but I'll draw back not. I'll be afraid not. For it is in between those mountains that the Shepherd Chief will meet me, and the hunger that I have in my heart all through this life will be satisfied.

Sometimes he makes the love rope into a whip, but afterwards he gives me a staff to lean upon. He spreads a table before me with all kinds of foods. He puts his hand upon my head and all the "tired" is gone. My cup he fills until it runs over. What I tell you is true. I lie not. These roads that are "away ahead" will stay with me through this life, and after; and afterwards I will go to live in the Big Tepee and sit down with the Shepherd Chief forever.⁷

This particular psalm means much to the Indian people, particularly those of the Southwest where the people are shepherds. Standing in the chapel at Cook Christian Training School one day, an Indian woman expressed herself in this fashion:

I like this Twenty-third Psalm. You will know why. Because I had been a shepherd. I was a girl; my father was living at that time; my father was a medicine man and he was very kind man. In those days the Navaho never heard the gospel before, and up to today some of the Navaho that are living in the rough mountains never have heard the gospel. There is a trading post, where my parents get some coffee and flour. Our home was located at Black Mountains where there are lots of cedar trees, which cover the mountains. That time the number of the sheep was about three thousand head in herds. My two sisters and two brothers and I helped to herd sheep, also five or six dogs were shepherds with us. When we are herding sheep the coyotes will try their best to hide around the bush and watch the lamb and see if we are away from the herds or on the other side of the herds. Coyote will try to catch the fat lambs. Sometimes if the dogs see the coyote they'll chase the coyote away.

In the summer when there is no rain, the herds and cattle and horses find it hard to get drink, because it gets too dry in the summer. When there is plenty rain, the herds and cattle and horses have plenty of drink and green pastures to feed them. In winter we herd sheep all day. Up in the mountains the snow gets about two or three feet or sometime four feet deep. So our father and mother have to teach us some exercises. Father and mother have to make us get up early in the morning and wash our hands and faces with snow and roll in the snow and run about one mile or a half mile to make us get used to cold weather and that we may be able to run after the herds. When the snow is deep, we usually herd on the sunshine side of the mountain slopes, where the volcanoes melt the snow right off.

Spring is the lambs' season. This is the lovely work that I love. It is wonderful to see the lambs, though it is hard work to do. My sisters and brothers and mother and I helped. No matter if it is rainy or snowy or stormy weather and sometimes nice bright weather. We have to work through all these things. Even when we are herding the sheep, they have their lambs. Sister or brother or I have to be there and carry some lambs home. Also it is hard to herd sheep in spring. The sheep will not look at each other, they will look at the green pastures to eat and they will be scattered all over, and we have hard times to gather them. And the goats are the worst; they can climb up the mountain steep. If the sheep is having her lamb when she is lost the dog will be looking after her while she have her lamb. The sheep will be saved. The next day the dog will come home with the saved sheep and lamb. My folks will be happy and give the dog something to eat.

When it's time to bring back the herds, the sheep will start to cry for their lambs. They will start to run about one mile or a half mile off toward home. The sheep will make a great noise and soon every herd will follow, and we'll be the last, and we will carry some lambs. When we gather the herds home, other brother and sister have to work on the sheep while we eat our supper; then we have to help. We feed the hungry lambs to the mother sheep that have milk. Each lamb that have to feed have their name. When we call the lamb's name she will be crying and following us, and we will feed her to the mother sheep. And the work is done about six to nine o'clock. In the morning we have to work on the same feeding of the lambs. And the *Lord* is *my* Shepherd.

It's lots of fun when we start to separate the lambs that are to be kept at home and let the sheep go out to be driven to the pastures. When I stay at home I take care of the little lambs. How nice to see the little lambs playing around the corral. When the lambs grow big enough to eat grass, they have to go out with the herds. My mother counts the black sheep and the brown sheep and the gray

sheep. If there is one or two colored sheep lost then there will be more sheep lost with the white sheep. The good shepherd dog will always follow the lost sheep.⁸

Rich in beauty also is this interpretation of Psalm 19. It compares favorably with that of King James's translators:

The Great Father above has shown his power by making the stars of the heavens, and the brightness of the lights in the sky is wonderful.

His voice is the voice of all nature, and his wisdom shows even in the darkness of the night. The whole earth is filled with the melody of God.

In the days of creation he sent forth the great sun shining like the brightness on the face of a lover, and whose strength warms all the world.

The law of the Great Father can do all good things and his words bring wisdom to simple souls.

Follow the way laid out by the Great Spirit of Wisdom and it will bring you in peace and contentment to a fine reward.

Wash my heart, O God, that the wicked things of earth gain not a victory over me, for I would stand straight like an arrow, looking up, and not bending down with any wrong doing.

May my lips speak aright—may my heart think aright, O thou who are the strength of my life and the Saviour of my soul.⁹

Only out of a truly devoted life and a close walk with God can come such a beautiful thought as this one from a Navaho Indian young man:



A SHEPHERD'S PSALM

Far above the four heavens,
Our blue, deep lands,
Sits Our Holy One, the Holy Almighty God;
Who guided our forefathers
Down through the centuries.
Thou hast led them in sorrows and joy;
Therefore we praise thy name forever and ever.

Thou hast also led us into this land.
Thou hast given us roots and berries to eat
And the pure animals for food and clothing.

We stand before thee with the little lambs
in our arms at noon hour;
Whose mothers have left them for the far beyond.
Which way to turn? To none other than to
Thee, Our Heavenly Father.

The footprints of our Elder Brother can
still be seen faintly.
One cannot find these footprints but by
very careful sight.
Their tread goes higher and higher.
But some day we will catch up with our Elder
Brother in the Far Beyond,
Above the four deep, blue lands.¹⁰

To appreciate more fully the Indian's deep and fine sense of God's goodness as well as his own ability to express himself simply and beautifully, one needs only to read this Pima girl's "Evening Meditation":

EVENING MEDITATION

Meditating on the rim of the Grand Canyon,
Meditating in the stillness of the evening hour,
Meditating upon him who made this wond'rous
 sight beyond description
Our thoughts dwell on our God, the One Almighty.
Our eyes reach out o'er this magnificence,
To take in quickly the breath-taking scene
 before in darkness it shall slip away.

We think upon the God, Creator of this beauty,
We think upon the God who hath preserved all
 things for mortals such as we;
And so we glorify him and in silence meditate
 beside the grandeur of this panorama great.

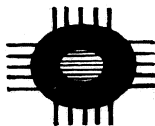
How manifold are all thy words, Jehovah!
 In wisdom thou hast made them all.
 The earth is full of thy riches,
Yea, he hath made his wond'rous works to be
 remembered.
And we rejoice to seek his face in meditation sweet.

Now the sun slips gradually down over the rim
 of the canyon
Making a picture with colors blending as
 Only the Great Artist can paint.
Gone now is the sun dipping the earth in twilight.
But we are not alone, not alone because
 the sun hath slipped away.
Nay, for we still feel the blessing
 of the Presence of the Great One,
Hovering o'er us as we wait, silently
Meditating on the canyon's rim.¹¹

Read also "An Early Morning Psalm" and see if your own heart isn't lifted to God on high. It should give you a greater appreciation for the Indian's deep sense of beauty and his fine art of perception and expression:

AN EARLY MORNING PSALM

I behold the beauty of thy early morning
dawn, Heavenly Father.
Unto thee will I lift mine eyes with thanks
for the dawn of another new day;
For all its beauty as the light of dawn
breaks over the horizon.
We see in it thy handiwork
of blending colors, so beautiful.
And we thank thee for the quietness
of the early morning
That we may worship and meditate
and call upon thee
For help and guidance throughout the day.
All the day long thou art watching
over thy children.
Thou hast given us the beauty round
about us
So that we might enjoy the wondrous
works of the Almighty.¹²



Indian writing of this type has been widely read and beyond doubt has stimulated a sense of appreciation in the minds of many non-Indian writers. Realizing the simple beauty of the Indian's style and thought, a former English teacher in the United States Government Indian Service wrote the following:

PARAPHRASE OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

Great Spirit, whose tepee is the sky
and whose hunting ground is the earth,
Mighty and fearful are you called.
Ruler over storms, over men
and birds and beasts:
Have your way over all—
Over earthways as over skyways,
Find us this day our meat and corn,
that we may be strong and brave.
And put aside from us our wicked ways as
we put aside the bad works of them
who do us wrong.
And let us not have such troubles
as lead us into crooked roads.
But keep us from all evil,
For yours is all that is—
the earth and the sky:
the streams, the hills,
and the valleys, the stars,
the moon, and the sun, and
all that live and breathe.
Wonderful, shining, mighty Spirit!¹³

Often the great story of a people is caught up in a legend that not only relates the story of that people but also reflects their inmost thoughts and feelings, revealing their close communion with God and harmony with the universe. Such a story is "The Big Cypress," told by the Choctaw:

For many days they had marched westward. Mississippi, their old home, was far behind. Even when they left, the white man's ax was destroying forever their old hunting grounds, and his plow turned up the bones of their loved ones.

Slowly they waded across the blue, rippling waters of the Mountain Fork River. Camp was made for the night. Their long journey was ended. They were now in their new homeland. It was impossible to forget the old home beyond the Father of Waters or the unmarked graves of those whose strength had not been equal to the long trail. Still they tried to forget all those things. They must not pause to look backward. *The Choctaw never looks backward!*

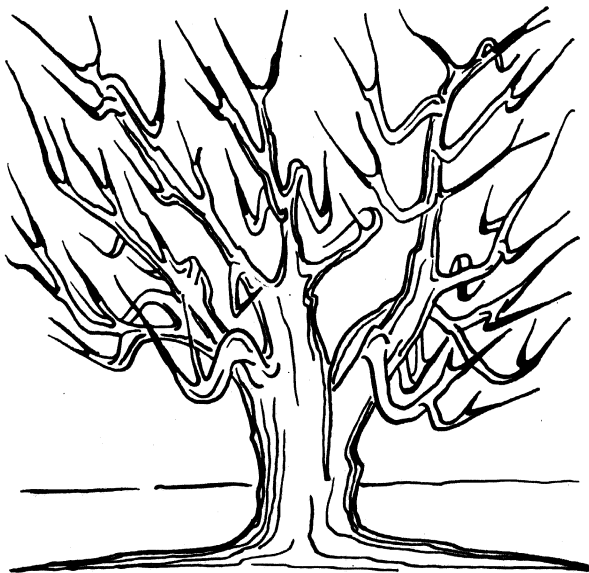
The evening meal was over. Night came swiftly after the golden curtains of the setting sun had faded. Many campfires gave light to the camp. The insects serenaded the new arrivals with concert after concert. The wise old owls came and chatted scolding welcomes from the safe, dark tops of the tall trees.

A horn sounded above the voices of the night. The call to the Council. Slowly they left their campfires and gathered around the large council fire. Soon their voices blended in singing songs of hope and gratitude to a loving Heavenly Father. Prayers were offered, and then they sat in reverent silence meditating the task of building homes in the new land. The insects played in muffled tones. The owls were silent. A gentle breeze stirred the lace-like foliage of the giant cypress trees. The pines merely nodded to each other. The Choctaw remained seated in reverent silence around the dying embers of the council fire.

From the top of a cypress came a voice as pleasant as the music of many waters:

"The Choctaw are now in the new homeland. The long journey is over. Let the Choctaw build cabins and enjoy this new hunting ground. And as a monument to the heroic suffering and fortitude of the Choctaw on this big journey, this cypress shall become the largest tree between the Great Eastern Mountains and the Mighty Mountains toward the going down of the sun. The Great Spirit has spoken."¹⁴

This great tree, now famous, is known as the largest tree in Oklahoma, standing ninety feet high, with a circumference of fifty-six feet.





CHAPTER TEN

All Things Must Be Made Beautiful

MEN HAVE different ways of expressing themselves. Some use the beautiful strains of music, others use the power of words, while others use the brush and chisel.¹

Anyone having had any experience with Indian people cannot help being conscious of their great creative skill in the field of art. Not only do they have a keen sense of proportion and color, but there is no denying their creative skill in portraying it.

A fine example of work created through skill combined with deep spiritual insight hangs above the altar in the Bacone College Chapel, a picture of Gethsemane, with Christ depicted as an Indian. There is a moving story behind it. Artist Richard West, Wah-pah-nah-yah, a Cheyenne art instructor at Bacone College, has not only pictured the Incarnation in its truest meaning to him, but he has revealed his soul.

Some months before he painted this picture, it had become known that his wife was suffering from a serious illness that



EASTON'S STUDIO

Richard West, who created the moving Indian version of Gethsemane pictured below, is doing outstanding work at Bacone College in preserving and developing the Indians' distinctive contribution to art.



threatened her life. Hand in hand they faced the dark future, placing themselves before God in full confidence. An operation for the removal of a brain tumor was performed and was successful.

The artist was driven by a desire to express his thanks, and he turned to his studio, where he found the means of expression that he understood best.

During Holy Week, 1952, he shut himself away from the world. One day, for only one hour, he admitted two friends, one of them to pose as a model for the face of the picture. As the model knelt in the scene, he was instructed to repeat over and over, "Thy will be done." The face was completed.²

Today the picture hangs in the beautiful chapel—a sermon on canvas, a painting that tells a story as only a devoted Indian artist could tell it. It hangs there as an expression of an individual's gratitude to the God who heard and answered his prayers.

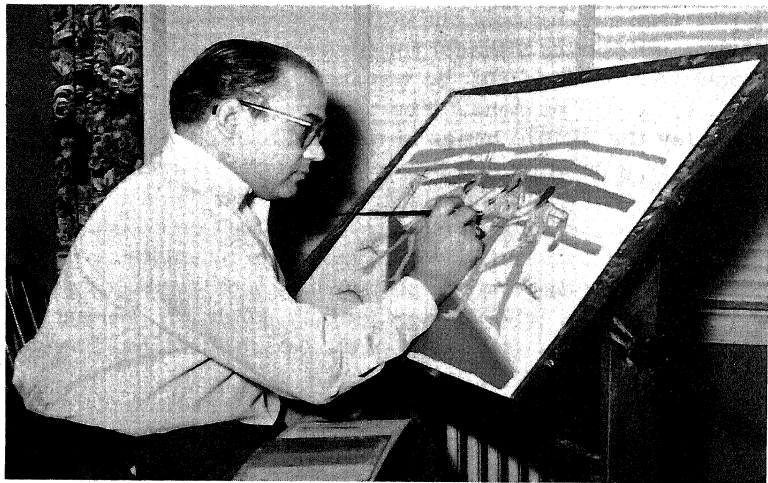
Like devotion and skill have been shown by another contemporary Indian artist and sculptor, Allan Houser, Art Instructor at Intermountain School, Brigham City, Utah. Mr. Houser, an Apache Indian, is a descendent of the Apache prisoners brought to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, with Geronimo.

At the end of World War II, the students at Haskell Indian Institute wished to honor those former students who had given their lives in the defense of their country. They asked Mr. Houser to create an appropriate memorial. Drawing from his skill and fine sense of propriety and beauty, he created the granite statue "Warrior in Mourning," which now stands in the foyer of the school auditorium.

True to Indian culture and tradition, here is pictured the Indian with a blanket about his shoulders and a warrior's head-dress at his feet, depicting in utmost simplicity the grief felt for

the fallen soldiers. It is more than a work of beauty and skill; it is an Indian's tribute to fallen friends and comrades.

These Indian artists are but continuing that which has for hundreds of years characterized their ancestors: *ie*, the driving desire to beautify all things they create and by creating them to fulfill their purpose to tell a story. Beauty was sacred, and that beauty was not to be denied to the most mundane and common



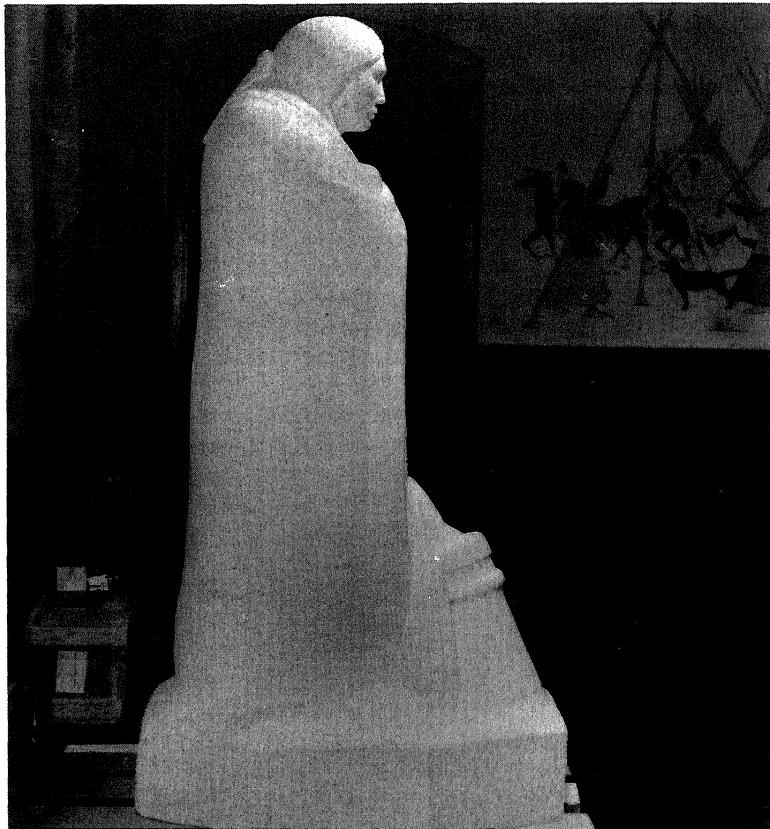
C. Terry Saul, Choctaw artist whose pictures decorate this book, is best known for his documentary-type paintings, which depict Indian life. He is also a popular illustrator. He is employed as an illustrator-draftsman with the Curtis-Wright Company in Garfield, New Jersey.

things. A tepee must of course be sturdy and useful, but it was also made attractive. A piece of pottery must hold water and be of some use in the household, but it was also decorated. A band about the head was beautified with weaving or beads, and the moccasins, strong and durable, were also made beautiful with beads.

All this has had a strong influence not only upon the present-day artists but also upon present-day art lovers. Go to any art gallery today and you will see countless numbers of paintings, carvings, and so on, that reflect the strong influence of our Indian Americans in the world of art:

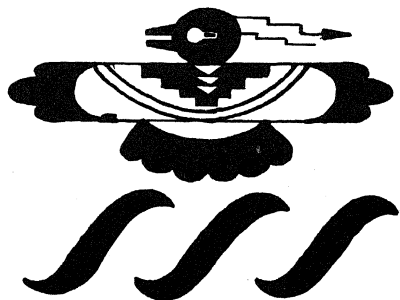
It has also become fashionable, for those persons of artistic taste who can afford it, to collect art objects of Indian make such as rugs, carved masks, and prehistoric pottery. This attention cannot help but have an effect upon our own art through adoption of technique, symbolism, and decorative elements.³

The skill of the silversmith who, with the most crude instruments, a small anvil, and a few home-made tools, still astounds the twentieth-century craftsman with his push-button machinery; and the patience of the Indian weaver, carefully creating a beautiful blanket or basket, seem altogether foreign to our bustling way of life. But they stand there as wonderful examples of how a people stubbornly fight for simplicity and beauty amid a civilization that would be much happier if it only had clearer eyes to see the things the Indians see. The Indian people have come a long way since the days when their ancestors attempted to express themselves by covering their bodies with pictures of birds, butterflies, and corn stalks or by covering the canyon walls with pictures; but the spirit is the same, and let us hope it never dies.



HASKELL INSTITUTE

Granite speaks eloquently of the strength and endurance of the Indian in sorrow in Allan Houser's "Warrior in Mourning."



CHAPTER ELEVEN

They Shall Lead The People

THE CROWNING gift of the Indian to our life and the Christian faith has been its rich leadership. There have always been Indian leaders, both good and bad, at many levels and in many fields—in hunting, war, healing, and matters of the spirit.¹ These leaders emerged because they had something to give and were capable of leadership. In our day of political campaigns and the seeking of offices, it might be well for us to recall that, contrary to many beliefs, Indian leadership was seldom sought, but rather was accepted as a sacred duty placed upon individuals by the people when their qualities of leadership were recognized. Today among many of the tribes, it is considered undignified openly to seek a place of leadership, but it is felt to be the duty of tribesmen to accept such responsibilities as are placed upon them by the people.

Historical events have greatly influenced the development of Indian leadership. The political maneuverings and open war-

fare that marked our early history created conditions out of which emerged such people as Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Chief Joseph, Sacajawea, and Samson Occum. These and many others would no doubt have been grief-stricken had they lived to see the time when the overwhelming power of the encroaching white civilization all but killed the proud spirit of the Indian. His leadership no longer seemed necessary and many times was actually discouraged, as the domineering culture took from him many of the areas in which he had previously been able to exercise choice and initiate action. Matters of health, education, property, and even religion were all decided for him. He was no longer needed in the Council Circle.

The Christian church cannot be held blameless in these matters. Too often the Indian was asked to give up much that was good and wholesome in order to become "Christian," and the Christian faith is the poorer because of it.

But to the Christian church can go much of the credit for the development of Indian leaders. While developing such leaders the church in turn has discovered that they come richly endowed with humility, faith, and devotion, as well as a burning zeal and freshness for the tasks ahead. The church has learned that by serving the needs of the Indians, just as in serving the needs of people in other groups, she has been repaid a thousand-fold through the deepening and enrichment of the Christian faith. Consecrated Indian Christians hold dear the wholesome things of the past and look forward to the new day assured them by the Christian hope.

The church went out as a message bearer. Now in many instances, she is listening. One hesitates to start naming Indian leaders, for their numbers are great, and many of them must be left unmentioned. But let us think of a few.



COOK TRAINING SCHOOL

These happy young men are graduates of the Cook Christian Training School in Phoenix, Arizona. Leon Grant, in the dark jacket, is an Omaha now directing the Indian Center in Phoenix, and the Reverend Wendell Chino is serving among his people at the Mescalero Apache Mission in New Mexico.

There is Esau Joseph, who is today carrying a tremendous responsibility as a missionary superintendent among the Pima people of Arizona. In the same part of the country, the work of the church is being enriched by the humble faith and radiating Christian spirit of Roe B. Lewis, president of the National Fellowship of Indian Workers, a teacher at the Cook Christian Training School, and minister of the Phoenix Indian Church.

Many of us, after long centuries of Christian influence, would find it difficult to measure up to the high standard of conduct and consecration set by such a person as Elmer Wellington, a Pima giving himself to the spiritual uplift of the Indians in Sells, Arizona, and presently the president of the Southwestern Regional Fellowship of Indian Workers.

The Reverend Vine Deloria, a Dakota who has gained the distinction of being the first Indian to be appointed by a national mission board to a position of national responsibility, is a fine example of present-day leadership within the church. He is in charge of the Indian work of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

In places of less prominence they also serve. Many years hence large numbers of Christians, both Indian and white, will be measuring the influence of Robert Chaat, a Comanche Indian who several years ago became the first Indian to be ordained by the Reformed Church in America. He now bears his Christian responsibilities at the Comanche Indian Mission in Lawton, Oklahoma, extending his Christian influence far beyond his congregation, which includes white people as well as Indians, and into all phases of his community.

On the West Coast of the United States stands a large urban church, showing active concern for the many aspects of complex community life in the city it serves. Each Sunday many of the influential people of that city—men of political and social



JOSEPH M. ELKINS

Beulah Melvin, from Fort Defiance, Arizona, on the Navaho Indian Reservation, a student at Barnard College, listens while Barnard's head nurse explains the use of medical instruments. Beulah plans to take a course at Columbia-Presbyterian School of nursing and then return to work at her hometown hospital.

importance—worship in the church, and they listen to the gospel preached to them by a Creek Indian, born and educated in Oklahoma, Dr. Earl Riley, formerly president of Bacone College.

Certainly one must mention Phillip and Susie Frazier, Friends workers at Hominy, Oklahoma; and Percy and Emma Tibbetts, Dakota Indians at work in Rapid City, South Dakota. If space allowed, an endless number could be named. Included in this list would be the scores of Indian interpreters, the missionary's devoted helpers, who in humble faith carry the Christian message from the lips of the white missionary to their own people.

Where the Indian has sought, he has found. And having found, he has given. What has he had to say? Let us listen to two Indian Christians.

Agnes Bond, director of Religious Education at Wheelock Academy, Millerton, Oklahoma, tells us:

I first came into this world on June 2, 1930. I was the second of three children. Our parents died when I was two years old. My sisters also died the same year.

My grandmother took me to live with her. She is a Choctaw Indian and the mother of my father. . . .

I worked my way through high school. At the end of my senior year when we gave our class history and what we were going to do, I proudly told them I was going to college to be a missionary. I was the only one with a vocation of this kind, so they announced I was going to "darkest Africa." At the time I had not applied to any school for entrance, but my prayers were soon answered.

A missionary to the Choctaw Indians, whom I had been helping with Vacation Bible School, asked me if I wanted to go to college. Well, you know the answer. . . .

Around the first of September, our Indian pastor and his wife took me to Warren Wilson Junior College in Swannanoa, North Carolina. How I did wish I had kept quiet. Since I had never been away from home, I was getting lonesome. . . .

After graduation, I applied at Maryville College, Tennessee. . . . One month ago Maryville College granted me a Bachelor of Arts degree in Christian Education. About a month before graduation, I accepted a position at Wheelock Academy as director of Christian Education under the Women's General Missionary Society of the United Presbyterian Church. . . .

Through all my college, my closest friends have had an opportunity to hear me say, "Only God could do it," and it is true.²

A young Navaho Christian tells his story:

During three years among the Navahos my work has been that of presenting the gospel of Christ in a simple way to the thousands of Navahos who thus far have not had the privilege of education and therefore cannot read the Bible, and to thousands still unreached by any missionary workers. Understanding is much needed in my reservation. Lack of education is the great problem of the Navaho people.

I can say like Ezekiel, "I sat where they sat" (*Ezekiel* 3:15). I live with my people, live where they live and think as they think. I have been a servant of God for three years. I use my own tongue to my people. It is hard for men and women who do not understand about reading and writing and have never been educated. Only in their own tongue can the gospel reach them in the camps, bringing the message to those who hunger for the good news of salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To you Christians I would say to pray for these people who are living in lonely places, that they may commit their lives to Jesus Christ; and for the children, that they may grow in their under-



SANTA FE RAILROAD

These women are carding wool for the beautiful Navaho blankets that are internationally known for their fine quality and artistic designs.

standing of God's love and care. Let us pray for these people, that God's message may apply in every area of their lives for these people of the Navaho.³

Many years ago a pitifully small band of the Nez Percé Indians spent long months working their way down to St. Louis, for they heard the white men had a Book of Heaven that revealed eternal truths. What a tragedy it was when they learned there was none for them. But their efforts were not in vain, for Christian leaders went out to them, and missionaries have been spreading throughout the Indian world ever since, sharing the gospel and the good life.

"No river can return to its source, yet all rivers must have a beginning."¹ So it is with life as we know it today. We have what we call "the American way of life," which is the sum total of the contributions of varied cultures. Many trails lead to the main road; many tributaries lead to the main stream and mingle with the other waters, so that the river flows ever wider, richer, and deeper. As Americans we will grow spiritually stronger and richer, not by shutting off some of the contributing currents but rather by accepting their flow into the lifestream of our society, where they can be glorified and used.

Today America stands as the debtor to a people poor in things but rich in spirit. It is a debt payable only through a spirit of gratitude and acceptance extended to the Indian people who have so greatly enriched life as we know it today, and who continue, in their own way and to the full extent of their ability, to give to contemporary American life.



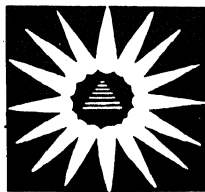
Nor think this mighty land of old contained
The plundering wretch, or man of bloody mind:
Renowned Sachems once their empires rais'd
On wholesome laws; and sacrifices blaz'd.
The generous soul inspir'd the honest breast,
And to be free, was doubly to be blest.⁴



EWING GALLOWAY

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2. It should be noted, in this connection, that, according to historical records, in 1883 a party of thirty-three Nez Percé Indian women and children were allowed to leave Indian Territory and return to their old home, and in 1884, 118 others were allowed to go. Chief Joseph, however, and 150 others were not permitted to return to Idaho, but were sent to Colville, Washington, where the grave of Chief Joseph is to be seen today. (See the *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1940 edition, Volume 16, page 211.)
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5. Bureau of Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Used by permission.
6. *Poetry*, a magazine of verse.
7. *Forum Magazine*. Used by permission of *Current History*.
8. Courtesy of Burl Ives. This song, recorded by Mr. Ives for Decca Records, is available as one of four songs in the album, "Christmas Day in the Morning."
9. Often Indian hymns have no titles as we know them, but are known only by their numbers.
10. By Reverend Alfred L. Riggs, one of the first missionaries to the Dakota, under the American Board of Commissioners.

CHAPTER 9

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3. Address by Dr. Frank Thompson, president of Bacone College.
4. By Harvey Allison, an Indian and former student at Cook Christian Training School, Phoenix, Arizona.
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6. Unpublished poems contributed by Dr. R. M. Firebaugh, Hugo, Oklahoma.
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